

Collaborating to protect WEST ARNHEM LAND AND KAKADU

Protecting West Arnhem Land and Kakadu from invasive species and threatening processes (2018-2023)

Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) is working collaboratively with land managers, ranger groups and other organisations across the West Arnhem and Kakadu region to protect environmental assets from the negative impacts of invasive weeds, feral animals and destructive fires.

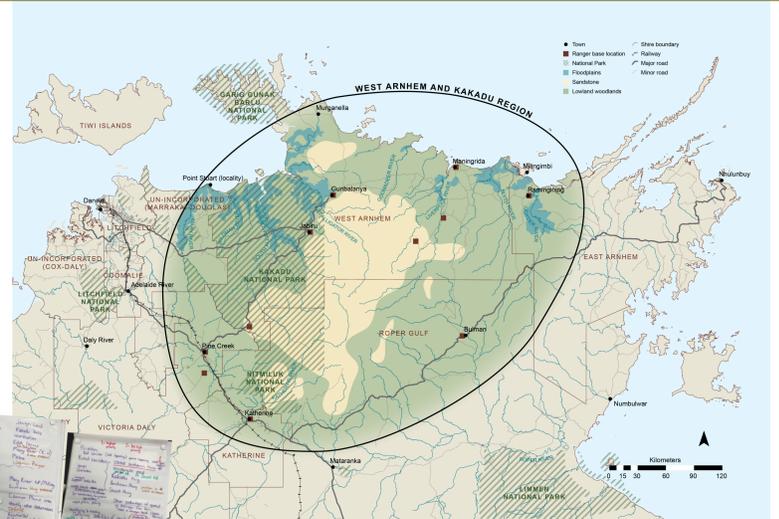
Project objectives:

- ▶ **Prevent spread of gamba grass and other priority weeds into the West Arnhem and Kakadu (WAK) region - target: treatment across 40,000 ha of land adjacent to Kakadu.**
- Manage buffalo and other priority feral animals to reduce impacts on the WAK region - target: management of 50,000 ha adjacent to Kakadu
- Support fire management to improve the condition of 5,000 ha of Arnhem Land Sandstone Plateau
- Increase community awareness about priority threats (i.e. weeds, ferals) to World Heritage Area, Ramsar wetlands and Arnhem Land Sandstone Plateau values
- Support collaborative planning and action to manage threats

Participatory planning to work out what needs to happen and where:

Project activities were determined using participatory planning processes. Many groups took part in workshops to determine what needed to happen and where. At the end of this process we had many lists of activities. We divided activities into three categories (weeds, ferals and fire), and two priority levels.

Activity lists from participatory planning workshop March 2019



The project region is vast, covering approximately 9 million hectares of the Top End of the NT

Many groups contributed to the participatory planning process



WEEDS

Weeds activities undertaken include survey, on-ground patrols, aerial spraying, making plans, monitoring impacts, increasing capacity through education and raising awareness

Through this project, TNRM is addressing priority activities covering different aspects of weed management and weed prevention, across local and regional scales.

Priority weed activities identified by the planning process included increasing capacity of stakeholders to undertake different aspects of weed spread prevention as well as improving management of current infestations. We have now completed year three of the project and most activities have been progressed. Some activities have been completed, and many are on-going.

Sept 2018, March and Oct 2020, March, July and Aug 2021: Weed ID and Weed Hygiene training, delivered by Charles Darwin University (Ranger Ready Training), Trainsafe NT and Weed Management Branch, with support from TNRM



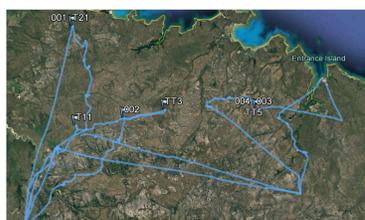
2019, 2020, 2021: Gamba awareness raising: regional plan poster, gamba grass spread model, 'Stop Gamba in its Tracks' campaign



April 2020 and 2021: Support aerial spray program for gamba grass management on Mary River National Park



March 2019: Aerial surveys to detect isolated gamba in 25,000 ha of Njanjma, Ardjumarllarl, Warddeken and Werenbun work area, and treatment of gamba at new and historic sites



July – Dec 2020: Search and destroy mimosa across 600 ha on the Blyth floodplain and Middar coastal area



2020 and 2021: Site management plans developed for long term (historic) gamba and mimosa sites



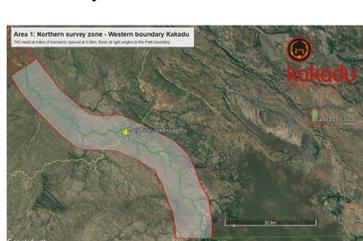
June 2020: Aerial survey to detect gamba grass in 30,000 ha of Djurrubu work area, around Mudginberri in Kakadu NP



2019, 2020, 2021: Support aerial spray program for mimosa management at Mekginj Valley (2019, 2020) and Mary River National Park (2021) and mimosa eradication at Arafura swamp (2020)



May 2021: Aerial survey to detect gamba grass along a 65 km long corridor of Kakadu's western boundary



Jan – June 2020 and 2021: Survey, patrol and treatment of gamba grass in road corridors and gravel pits, totalling approx. 8,000 ha (800 km)



2019, 2020, 2021: Monitoring at priority sites (vegetation/flora plot, disturbance transect, aerial image)



Oct 2021: Aerial survey to detect para grass and olive hymenachne (potential threats to the Alligator Rivers Yellow Chat) on targeted parts of Kakadu floodplains



Where to next (activities for year four and five of the project):

- Continue to support West Arnhem groups to undertake strategic weed management activities.
- Provide fee-for-service opportunities for groups to remove invasive weeds, particularly to address pathways of spread.
- Increase capacity of stakeholders in the region to recognise weeds and prevent weed spread - spread prevention is critical to keeping Kakadu National Park free of invasive weeds like gamba grass and mimosa.
- Provide targeted education about gamba grass – help all people in the West Arnhem region to recognise gamba grass, and understand what they can do to prevent this grassy weed spreading into the region.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the many stakeholders, ranger groups and organisations who have been working together to protect West Arnhem Land and Kakadu from invasive species and threatening processes

Image credits: Arafura Swamp Aboriginal Corporation, Tom Price (NTG Weeds Branch)



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