

THE FINNISS REYNOLDS CATCHMENT GROUP PROJECT

ENGAGING A DIVERSITY OF STAKEHOLDERS TO OVERCOME CATCHMENT SCALE CHALLENGES

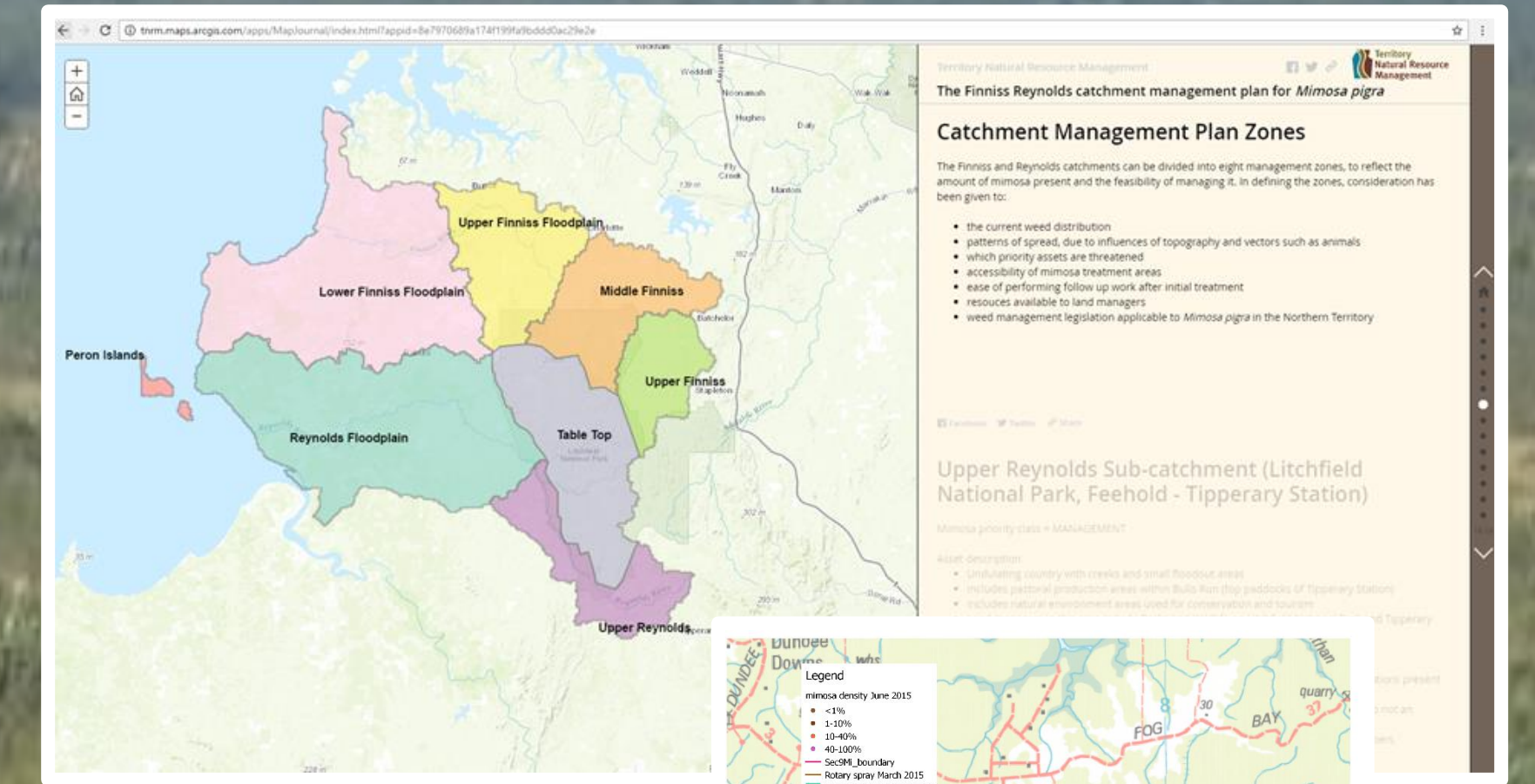
INITIATIVE

In 2012, the five year long Finnis Reynolds Catchment Group Project was begun, to instigate collaborative management of the woody floodplain weed, *Mimosa pigra*, and feral pigs in the Finnis and Reynolds Rivers region of the Northern Territory, over a 5,500 square kilometre area with 900 land parcels. Given the catchment expanse, not everyone has the same priorities, but despite this, it has been possible to find some activities which draw everyone together.

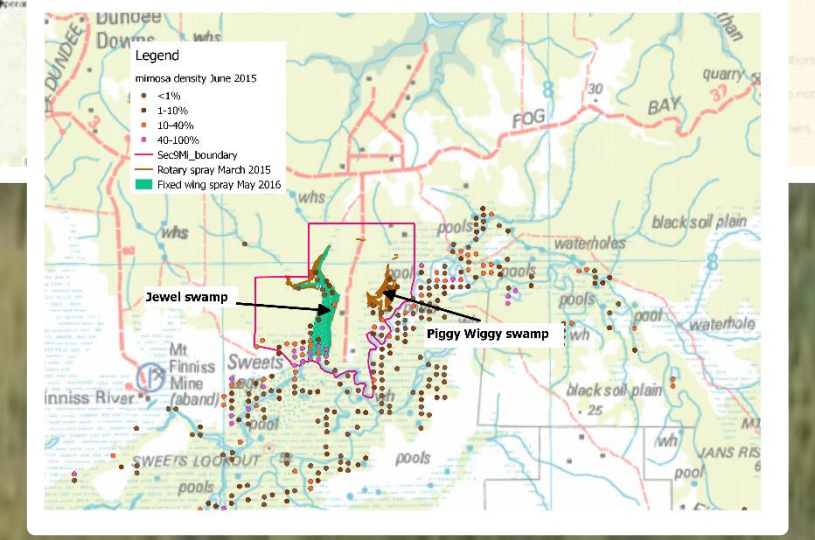


Mimosa pigra seeds are water borne. The hairy seed pods separate into segments which float on water.

Feral pig management is important. Soil disturbance and loss of competition from plants enables germination of the *Mimosa pigra* seed bank. Image credit: Wildscience



The catchment management plan is on the web in an ArcGIS story journal format



Treatment data is put onto maps for property owners

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the FRCG project was to draw people into a group from all corners of the catchment. This group was to have a project officer and a steering committee or Technical Advisory Group, to take ownership of much of the decision making and steer the group to perform strategic management of *Mimosa pigra* and feral pigs at catchment scale.



Quarterly stakeholder meeting



Finniss Reynolds Catchment Group stall at Batchelor Markets

METHOD/ APPROACH

The FRCG uses consultation at its meetings to align tasks and people where possible, with the project officer keeping an ear out for what interests which stakeholders. Some activities have caught nearly everyone's interest and have been really valuable in engaging people across the catchment as a whole.

A biodiversity audit was conducted across the catchment in 2015, with properties volunteering study sites. Results have generated discussion about possible follow up studies, and stakeholder interest has prompted applications for grant funding to examine some of the populations identified in the audit.

In creation of the catchment management plan for *Mimosa pigra*, stakeholders were invited to give input into the styling of the plan and provide work plan details, giving ownership and responsibility to themselves, the users of the plan. The plan is live through Esri's ArcGIS Online Story Journal template, which seems to have particular stakeholder appeal due to its interactive story telling style.

In the catchment, the mimosa flea beetle has really taken off since the start of the project, and seeing the changes to infestations and seed output really excites stakeholders. People are interested in being involved in agent redistribution as it makes them feel good to be part of a solution as opposed to a problem and empowers them to help manage weeds in a natural way without needing to rely on chemicals.



The mimosa flea beetle *Nesaeocrepida infuscata*



Flea beetle defoliation on *Mimosa pigra*



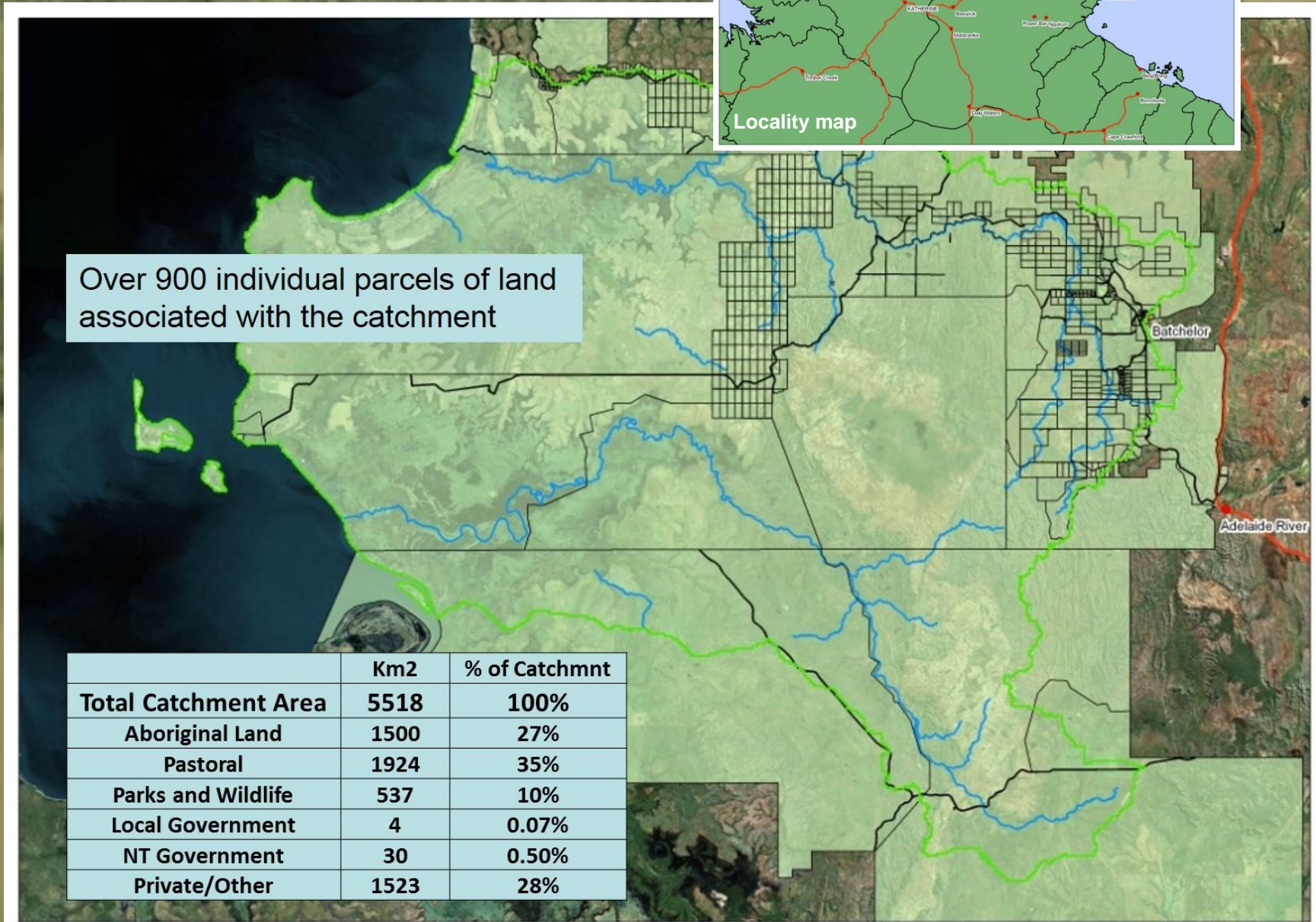
Batchelor Institute Indigenous defence students count flea beetles they have collected on Adelaide River floodplains, for release at Rum Jungle Lake in the Finnis catchment



Bulgul Land and Sea Rangers assist with drift fence and camera trap set up for wet season biodiversity monitoring in 2016



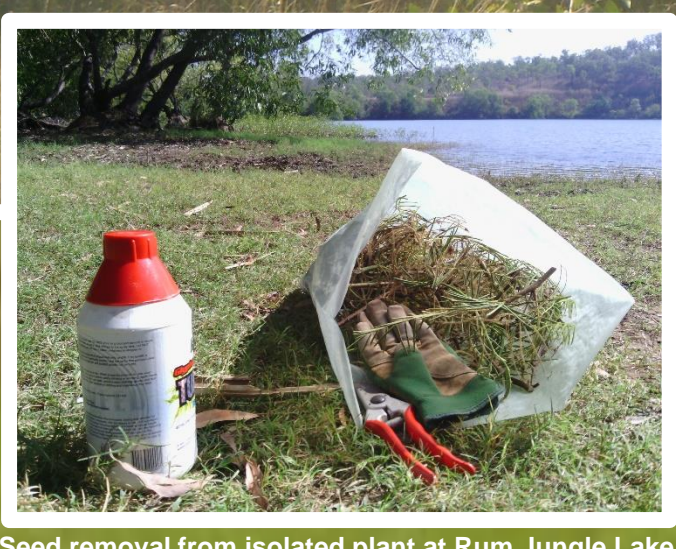
The threatened species *Varanus paroties*, the floodplain monitor, was captured on camera trap at a number of monitoring sites in mid 2015.



The catchment has a diverse mix of land tenures Image credit: Northern Territory Government, Department of Environment and Natural Resources



Aerial spraying treats large monocultures Image credit: Bulgul Land and Sea Rangers



Ground spraying of 6m high mimosa Image credit: Bulgul Land and Sea Rangers

Seed removal from isolated plant at Rum Jungle Lake

KEY FINDINGS

Across such a broad geographic area, not everyone needs to be involved in the same things. Whilst some activities are focussed at property level, it is important to have enough things in the mix to draw everyone together at catchment level over a common interest where possible.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall the project has progressed well with stakeholders engaged in a range of activities, at a range of scales across the catchment. Project outcomes include a reduction in weed infestation in the catchment, identification of priority fauna species in the area, and increased establishment of biocontrol agents. The regional NRM body for the NT, Territory Natural Resource Management, is now helping the group to highlight their achievements, market gains made through the project, and promote some priority catchment activities as sponsorship opportunities for companies.