



## PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY AND PRODUCTIVITY IN THE EAST KIMBERLEY

### The Project

Sought to –

- Increase awareness of the threat and extent of fires within the region.
- Identify through community engagement areas of potential biodiversity significance and how best they could be protected.
- Implement a burning program to protect identified assets.
- Develop and encourage communication and collaboration across multiple organisations.

### Where do fires come from?

**Early Season** (January - June) burns are carried out to improve pastoral production and to reduce fuel loads. The burns are often cool, slow moving and subject to residual moisture and high humidity levels that combined will extinguish the fire of an evening. They leave unburnt areas and generally are considered to have a minimal effect on the environment when compared to mid and late season fires.

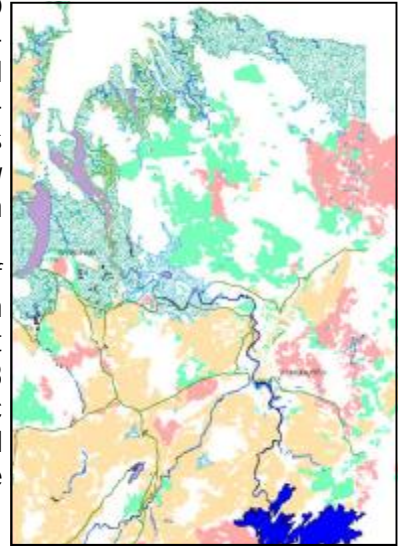
**Mid Season** (July - September) burns can become wild fires, particularly when subject to low humidity levels, strong winds and little or no residual vegetation moisture. They burn with much more intensity and are capable of burning for many days covering large areas. Their effect on the environment is much more severe than early season fires and can be a danger to both life and property.

**Late Season** (October - December) burns are generally a mixture of unauthorised fires and lightning strikes. High humidity and in some cases rain can influence the intensity of these fires so environmental impacts are extremely variable but they are considered to be wildfires.

### Fire Scar Mapping

Fire hot spots are picked up daily using satellite technology. These are then mapped as fire scars. In the accompanying maps the areas green, orange and red show early, mid and late season burns respectively.

2006 shows where lack of early season burning can lead to a significant amount of mid season burning. 2008 shows how some strategic early burns can limit mid and late season fires to some extent

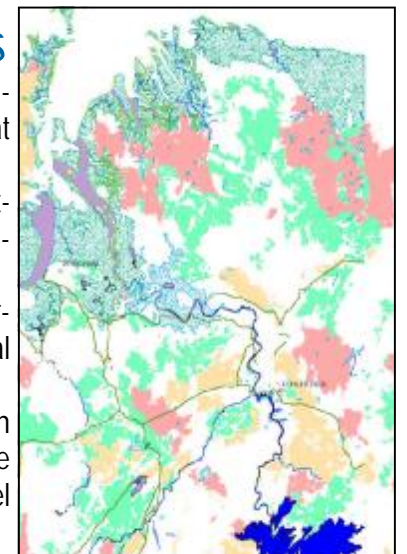


Fire scars for 2006

### Priority Fuel Reduction Areas

The community consultation process identified that deliberately lit, mid season fires had the greatest capacity to cause damage. A number of local sites were identified as areas of high environmental significance at which an early season burning program should be undertaken to reduce fuel levels

(see over page)



Fire scars for 2008



**Roads and Tracks:** Many fires are known to be started from the edges of roads and tracks. Priority will be given to reduce fuel loads through early season burning along the down wind side (north and west) of roads and tracks adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas.

**Existing fence lines and Fire Breaks:** Fire breaks along fence lines and tracks will generally not stop wildfires. However they serve as 'jump off' points to back burn into the face *of* wildfires.

Priority will be given to reducing fuel loads on the up wind side (south and east) of fire breaks in front of environmentally sensitive areas such as the Knox Creek Paddock fence line east of Kununurra (See Map).



Map of priority fuel reduction areas

**Other areas:** There were a number of areas identified where a controlled burn would plug a gap between natural features, e.g. roadways and other burning programs. Proposed sites included areas of land (See Map)–

- East of Eight Mile Creek.
- West of the Keep River and south of the Legune Road.
- Between Weaber Road and the Abney Hill.

## Community Engagement

A workshop and a number of 'one on one' meetings were held to identify and prioritise sites considered to be of environmental value within the project area. These sites would be the focus of fire management activities.

### Rated high priority

- Livistona Range 70,828 ha.
- Mirima National Park 2,063 ha.
- Packsaddle Wetland 895 ha.
- Ningbing Range 21,749 ha.
- Mount Zimmerman/Septimus 14,317 ha.
- Pincombe Range Reserve 17,898 ha
- Weaber Range 29,149 ha
- Fishfarm Road wetlands 219 ha.
- Boab Spring.
- Snake Spring.
- Bamboo Spring.
- King Gordon Spring.
- Bull Spring.
- Gladys's Spring.
- Leichardt Spring.
- Stonewall Creek area 462 ha.
- Lake Kununurra riparian area 609 ha.
- Packsaddle Creek riparian area 367 ha
- Typhnum gazetted rare flora site
- Ningbing east 1192 ha (Callitris outside reserves).
- Carlton north 5528 ha (Callitris outside reserves).

### Rated medium priority

- Carr Boyd Ranges and saturated soil buffer 121,268ha.
- Maxwell Plain north 520 ha.
- Mirima north 1,021 ha.
- Lost City 185 ha.
- Mirima south 243 ha.
- Matheson Ridge 1481 ha.



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## FURTHER INFORMATION

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