



Sam Seitterfield

To be of value, characteristics of a healthy landscape have to be easily measured

HOW TO TELL IF A LANDSCAPE IS HEALTHY

The characteristics or “attributes” of a healthy savanna vary depending on the scale you are looking at, and the particular values you have.

- At the scale of the paddock or place, all savanna users want the landscape to work: to be functional, with good soil and reliable pasture, dependable provision of traditional foods and resources for native plants and animals.
- Larger areas of healthy landscape need extra attributes that vary more between users. For whole properties pastoralists might look for healthy cover of perennial grass and adequate woodland areas. For whole clan estates, Aboriginal people may look for resources needed to sustain a traditional lifestyle. For a whole region, conservationists look for viable populations of all species in the area.

HAVE YOUR SAY

If these ideas about savanna health are going to be of practical value, they will need to be thought about carefully and widely accepted. The Tropical Savannas CRC is looking for your ideas on these issues. See the more detailed statement on our website. To ask for a copy or make a comment, write, phone or email us using the contacts on the back of this brochure.

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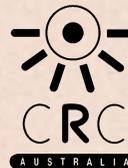
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WHAT IS HEALTHY COUNTRY?

In Australia's tropical savannas



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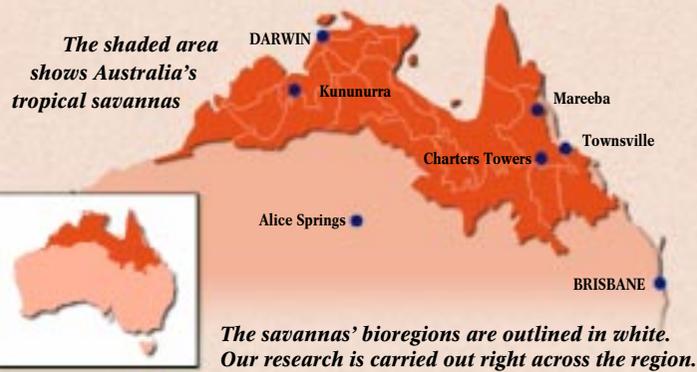
TROPICAL SAVANNAS CRC
Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Savannas Management

LINKING THE NORTH

THE TROPICAL SAVANNAS

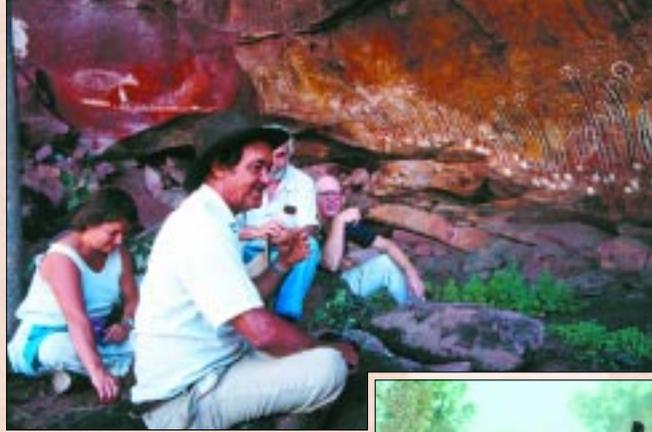
The Tropical Savannas are the grassy woodlands of northern Australia. These landscapes are important for many different reasons.

- Aboriginal people use them for hunting and ceremony.
- Pastoralists use them for grazing cattle.
- Tourists use them to appreciate nature and culture.
- They are a storehouse of biodiversity as well as providing good soil and clean water.
- There are significant mining and military uses.



WHY WORRY ABOUT THE HEALTH OF TROPICAL SAVANNAS?

- Land uses in the tropical savannas are based on different values, so we need a way of telling when one use of the landscape is compromising other uses.
- A healthy landscape meets the needs of a range of users in the long term. We need a set of characteristics that describe this landscape. These characteristics must be able to be monitored by land users.



Dennis Schulz

Different land uses, such as tourism and pastoralism, affect savanna landscapes in different ways. A healthy landscape meets the needs of a range of users in the long term



Dennis Schulz

A DEFINITION OF HEALTHY TROPICAL SAVANNAS

Developed by the Tropical Savannas CRC through its links with a range of savanna users.

A healthy savanna:

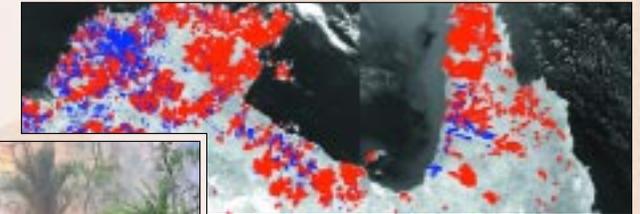
- Maintains basic functions at all space scales including:
 - Nutrient cycling
 - Water capture
 - Provision of food and shelter for fauna
- Maintains viable populations of all native species of plants and animals at appropriate space and time scales.
- Reliably meets the long-term needs (material, aesthetic and spiritual) of people who have an ongoing interest in the savannas.

WHAT IS HEALTHY COUNTRY?

Such a landscape has three basic qualities:

- It can effectively capture water, cycle nutrients and provide food and shelter for animals. This allows the landscape to produce clean water, good pasture, crops and animal habitat.
- It has secure populations of all plants and animals native to a particular area, at least at the scale of river catchments and above. This maintains the distinctive biological heritage of the savannas.
- It caters for the important values of savanna users. To ensure people stay on the savannas so the land can be managed effectively.

Department of Land Administration WA



BECNT

Fire management issues change with scale: at the woodland scale issues include flame height and fire breaks. At the continent scale issues include seasonal burning patterns and land-management legislation

WHAT'S NEW ABOUT THIS DEFINITION

It is innovative in a number of ways:

- This definition is based on what different people need from the landscape.
- The definition recognises the importance of scale; healthy country has different characteristics when we look at individual paddocks, compared to whole properties or regions.
- It provides a framework within which savanna users can work out how to accommodate different values in land use.

For example, biodiversity, production, traditional Aboriginal and tourist values.