

GLM and cultural knowledge combine to care for country

Des Grainer is a Land Management Officer for the Wagiman Land Trust in the Upper Daly region. The Wagiman are developing a cattle enterprise on their land and GLM has helped them to fine-tune their infrastructure planning and fire management.

Grazing Land Management workshops

Grazing Land Management (GLM) workshops provide you with the skills and ability to assess the health of each paddock and manage stocking rates to optimise the carrying capacity of your enterprise.

The workshop will assist you to:

- Assess the condition of your paddocks and improve carrying capacity
- Understand the relationship between pasture, water, soils, woodlands, biodiversity, fire and weeds
- Investigate pasture restoration techniques
- Determine the financial impact of grazing management options

The workshop, one of MLA EDGE^{network}® training packages, pools scientific and landholder knowledge specific to northern Australia.

The workshop consists of open discussions and builds on the wealth of knowledge and experience that already exists within the industry.

Technical information is demonstrated both in and out of the 'classroom' therefore a 'hands on' approach is used.

A GLM workshop will help you to develop grazing management strategies to optimise land condition, production and profit.

GLM graduate:

Des Grainer, Kybrook Farm

Location:

Wagiman Land Trust, Northern Territory

Property area:

4,000 km²

Enterprise:

Early stages of developing a cattle enterprise

Goal:

"To have an economic base that allows people to get back on country and to keep it healthy"

For further information contact

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Phone: 08 8973 9763

How can a GLM workshop help your enterprise?

Case Study: Wagiman Land Trust

Background

Des Grainer has spent most of his career working in the cattle industry and in land management. His role with the Wagiman Rangers is to coordinate the ranger group and to assist with the development of the cattle enterprise.

Des decided to attend the GLM course to gather more information about their land holdings and see what tools were available for managing the cattle business.

How GLM has changed him

“We now focus more closely on grasses. It was good to learn how grasses in different condition affect your financial return. We want to know how to graze cattle in a way that looks after the country and GLM definitely helped us with this.”

The issues

The Wagiman people are in a unique position in that they have been managing their land for cultural purposes and are now establishing a cattle enterprise.

“We’re still going through our business plan development. The aim is to do business on our country but also look after the country. The cattle industry is something our people have been involved in before and is close to what they know” says Des.

But developing a business enterprise on traditional lands can be tricky. Going to GLM helped Des to explain to his committee why fire management will need to change.

“We need to establish a fire plan which considers the cattle enterprise and feed issues” he says. “But we have to also do things in a way that respects the traditional ways.”

Des also notes that starting from scratch has advantages – especially when it comes to planning the infrastructure. When deciding where to clear fence lines, they are able to manage the risk of soil erosion from the start. The GLM course covered topics such as the use of whoa boys and stabilisation banks.

“We’re always visiting fence lines after the Wet to see if any damage has occurred and working out how we can do it better next time” says Des.

The future

“The Wagiman group is in an unusual situation compared to most cattlemen – we look at the country in a cultural way but we’re stepping into mainstream business.”

For Des, the opportunity to interact with other land managers was a highlight of the GLM course.

“It was good to hear their stories. They talked about how they saw the country in terms of fire, weeds and tree thickening, and also what they thought the causes were. We have lots of thoughts about why we do things on country so it was important for us to hear other manager’s ideas on things.”

The Wagiman experience shows that cultural and economic needs can be met if careful planning is done.

“We are conscious of the effects of development. We think about all our actions and what issues might arise in the future” Des explains. “We are about looking after country - we have a good chance to get it right from the beginning. We have plenty of time to get it right because we’re building up slowly and learning as we go.”

Final word

“In the future, our young people will see country from both sides - cultural and business. The course was a big eye opener for all of us.”



Northern
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Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry
National Landcare Program

