

Savanna Futures Forum

28th February 2008

Mal Nairn Auditorium, Charles Darwin University

The Tropical Savannas CRC is now in its thirteenth year. During that time it has made a significant contribution to our understanding and practical management of northern Australia, and while we have learned much we have also generated many new questions. This forum will review the lessons learned, but equally importantly, will assess how this knowledge can be applied in the years ahead. What is the future for Australia's tropical savannas? [* Current or past student supported by the CRC]

8.00 Registration

8.30 Welcome

David Garnett

Session 1 – Overview / Landscape ecology and health Chair: David Garnett

8.50 Achieving a sustainable future for Australia's savannas: lessons from a decade of cooperative research.

John Ludwig

9.10 Savanna carbon dynamics

Dick Williams

9.30 Closing the gate after the grass has bolted: research to improve future weed management and policy

Michael Douglas and Samantha Setterfield

9.50 Drivers of landscape change

Aaron Petty*

10.10 Panel discussion

10.40 *Morning tea*

Session 2 – Industry and community NRM

Chair: Paul Novelty

11.00 Is Heffernan right? What is the real potential for pastoral and agricultural development in North Australia?

Neil MacDonald, Robyn Cowley and Steve Petty

11.20 Fire management

Jeremy Russell-Smith

11.40 Monitoring and managing biodiversity

John Woinarski

12.00 Talking turkey about future conservation directions: how to cater for dispersive species in a dynamic landscape.

Mark Ziembicki*

12.20 Panel discussion

12.50 *Lunch and book launch: 'Future options for north Australia' by Stephen Garnett, John Woinarski, Rolf Gerritsen and Gordon Duff (See more details overleaf)*

Session 3 – Regional planning and management

Chair: Peter Whitehead

13.50 Outback livelihoods: continuing conundrums

Rolf Gerritsen

14.10 Lessons from Ngukurr, the wrong side of the Roper

Eva McRae-Williams*

14.30 What does savanna regional natural resource management deliver? How do we know?

Cathy Robinson

14.50 Enhancing community benefits from regional development: it's not just what you do but how you do it.

Natalie Stoeckl and Owen Stanley

15.10 Panel discussion

15.40 *Afternoon tea*

Session 4 – Human capability development

Chair: Stephen Garnett

16.00 Job Done? Is Indigenous capacity done?

Joe Morrison

16.20 Indigenous management of turtles and dugongs in northern Australia

Rod Kennett

16.40 Talk about a walkabout: pathways and potholes for savanna knowledge in schools.

Julie Crough

17.00 There's more where that came from: future directions for NRM Information Tools in northern Australia.

Peter Jacklyn

17.20 Panel discussion and summary

17.50 onwards – Drinks, barbecue and further in-depth discussion.

If you have not already registered could you please do so by the morning of Monday 25th February using the registration form on the next page. There is no charge to attend, but for catering purposes we need to know numbers both for the forum and book launch, and for the barbecue that follows. Please let us know if you have any special dietary requirements.

Unless we hear to the contrary we will assume that all those already registered for the forum will also plan to attend the barbecue.

The forum will be held at the Mal Nairn Auditorium (Building 35), Casuarina Campus, Charles Darwin University and the barbecue will be at Student Square, which is close to the auditorium (largely surrounded by Building 31). A map of the campus is available at:

http://www.cdu.edu.au/campusmaps/maps/cas_map07.pdf

LUNCH TIME BOOK LAUNCH

Future options for north Australia by Stephen Garnett, John Woinarski, Rolf Gerritsen and Gordon Duff

Anticipating the future is uniquely human. We strive constantly to anticipate trends and great events, to seek opportunity and avoid disaster. So what will drive the future of tropical Australia? The four authors of this book, all of whom have a close association with the Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Savanna Management, identify ten major drivers that will shape the north: population, social function, property rights, Commonwealth policy, the global economy, resource use, oil futures, climate change, invasive organisms and technological innovation. For each they identify the risks, uncertainties and the extent to which they can be controlled by the people of the north. Then they describe seven possible futures: chronic underdevelopment, degeneration, a northern ricebowl, an industrial powerhouse, environment first, an Indigenous community Utopia and dynamic urbanization. These are not predictions. They are scenarios to make readers think and realize that the decisions being made today will have a profound influence in the future. Whereas for the rest of the world, the future has largely been set by unplanned development and the irrevocable contingencies of history, northern Australia can be moulded by deliberate and considered choices. Our generation has the opportunity and frightening responsibility to make those choices.

Stephen Garnett has had experience in many different sectors – Indigenous, pastoral, government and academic – in his 30 years in tropical Australia. John Woinarski is the doyen of environmental scientists in the north with a deep understanding of the evolutionary processes that have shaped, and will shape, our region. Rolf Gerritsen is an economist with an independent view of trends in tropical economies and Gordon Duff, who once headed the Tropical Savannas CRC, has had decades of experience bringing diverse groups together in a common purpose to take the north forward towards a more harmonious future.