

**Homesat TV East Kimberley**

**From:** Homesat TV East Kimberley [satlink@agn.net.au]  
**Sent:** Monday, 3 May 2004 10:38 AM  
**To:** crichardsonapb@inet.net.au  
**Cc:** KACHANA  
**Subject:** Donkey grazing project on Kachana

Dear Chris,

Thank you for taking the time to listen to some of my concerns with regard to what is happening in an managed upper river-catchment areas. I hope the most enjoyable flow of rum at El Questro did not make the flow of my tongue too incoherent. As threatened, please find herewith some follow-up to our discussion.

**Project: to modify the behaviour of donkeys so that they can be used as a landscape management tool**

Thanks to communication with those at the operational end of the local Donkey Culling Operation we still have a small viable population of donkeys on Kachana in the central region of our Stock-Route Valley. (This area lies within the Kachana lease and is bordered by managed country to the North, unmanaged ranges, cliffs and gorges to the East and West and unmanaged pastoral lease country to the south.)

The line of reasoning behind leaving this population intact is that it could now be argued that in unmanaged rangeland areas the environmental damage of wild-fire is in many instances greater than damage created by feral stock. Furthermore it could also be argued that it is not the feral species per se that cause the damage, but specific behaviour of the individuals who comprise the local populations of a species.

What we wish to explore is:

- Can we modify the behaviour of these introduced herding herbivores so that they actually contribute to rangeland health and productivity rather than aggravate the existing trends in the environments where they now exist?
- Are there more cost-effective ways to spend tax-earner funds by placing a focus on positive environmental out-comes rather than on eradication and follow-up surveillance?
- Do we require different options/solutions in different situations? (managed pastoral industry land; unmanaged upper river-catchment areas; unmanaged rangeland; national parks; land managed for aboriginal interest groups; water reserves, etc)
- What viable options are there?
- What scientific substantiation do we require so as to be in a position to evaluate the merit of these options?

In some areas we have been getting some very encouraging results from modifying the behaviour of existing feral cattle. An example of this can be seen in the photographs of the article on: <http://managingwholes.com/kachana1.htm>

Can/should we also put our feral donkeys to work?

<http://members.westnet.com.au/satlink/KACHANA-WORKSHOP/2002%20Donkey%20issue.pdf>

During the dry season of 2003 Bob Henggeler (my father with over twenty five years of range-land experience in Africa) came to Australia and spent four months with our small donkey population using "pressure-release" techniques that have proven to be very useful in working with other types of livestock ( [http://managingwholes.com/\\_lowstress.htm](http://managingwholes.com/_lowstress.htm) ). This has allowed him to get a reasonably accurate assessment

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of numbers and conformation of the local population groups. He has returned this year (2004) to continue last years effort in an attempt to now form existing groups into a herd.

It is now time for a coordinated strategy that is acceptable to Local Government and to Government Agencies. For this we seek according input and support. We feel a need to compare existing knowledge within the AFB and other agencies, with specific information and field-experience gathered by Bob Henggeler to discuss the merits of this project. We then need to assess the desirability of continuing with this project.

If we are to continue we would need to:

- Define an acceptable population size to run this experiment
- Define a three to five year plan that is acceptable to all parties (this would need to include funding options for the gathering of relevant data and scientific evaluation thereof) (We currently have a number of researchers already working with us in other areas and it would be possible to extend this work to cover this project.)
- Have measures and means in place to deal swiftly and effectively with unwanted herd increase and/or potential spillage out of the project area (as could arise from a run of good seasons, mistakes made in the implementation of this new phase of the herd-training process or if the concept should prove to be unworkable in the given situation.

Your personal thoughts on this and any advice as to with whom we need to make contact regarding this proposal would be greatly appreciated.

Best regards,

Chris (Henggeler)

*Kachana Pastoral Company promoting environmental literacy and functional science:*  
[www.environmental-literacy.com](http://www.environmental-literacy.com) (Learning to read what Nature is telling us now.)

So what exactly do we mean by "Environmental Literacy"?

- The link above takes you to a two-page summary of:
- What we think it means and what it does not mean
  - How we hope to do our part in meeting the challenges we all face

For Kachana Pastoral Company input regarding **ecological issues** please visit:  
[http://members.westnet.com.au/satlink/ENVIRONMENTAL-LITERACY/grass\\_roots\\_input.htm](http://members.westnet.com.au/satlink/ENVIRONMENTAL-LITERACY/grass_roots_input.htm)

Our **recent Web-updates** include:

Salinity: Do we end up getting what we deserve?  
[http://members.westnet.com.au/satlink/ENVIRONMENTAL-LITERACY/Salinity\\_microenvironment.htm](http://members.westnet.com.au/satlink/ENVIRONMENTAL-LITERACY/Salinity_microenvironment.htm)

How do we prepare our landscapes for the rain we expect?  
[http://members.westnet.com.au/satlink/ENVIRONMENTAL-LITERACY/biological\\_land\\_prepA.htm](http://members.westnet.com.au/satlink/ENVIRONMENTAL-LITERACY/biological_land_prepA.htm)

March 2004 contribution to the WA Greenhouse Debate  
[http://members.westnet.com.au/satlink/ENVIRONMENTAL-LITERACY/WA\\_Greenhouse\\_debate\\_0403.htm](http://members.westnet.com.au/satlink/ENVIRONMENTAL-LITERACY/WA_Greenhouse_debate_0403.htm)

Chris H met Chris R at the PGA  
 conference held at El Questro 2004.  
 We had a lengthy private discussion  
 about the donkey cull.

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