

Culture, Ecology and Economy of Fire Management in North Australian Savannas: Rekindling the Wurrk Tradition



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This engaging volume explores the management of fire in one of the world's most flammable landscapes: Australia's tropical savannas, where on average 18% of the landscape is burned annually. Impacts have been particularly severe in the Arnhem Land Plateau, a center of plant and animal diversity on Indigenous land.

Culture, Ecology and Economy of Fire Management in North Australian Savannas documents a remarkable collaboration between Arnhem Land's traditional landowners and the scientific community to arrest a potentially catastrophic fire-driven decline in the natural and cultural assets of the region – not by excluding fire, but by using it better through restoration of Indigenous control over burning.

This multi-disciplinary treatment encompasses the history of fire use in the savannas, the post-settlement changes that altered fire patterns, the personal histories of a small number of people who lived most of their lives on the plateau and, critically, their deep knowledge of fire and how to apply it to care for country. Uniquely, it shows how such knowledge and commitment can be deployed in conjunction with rigorous formal scientific analysis, advanced technology, new cross-cultural institutions and the emerging carbon economy to build partnerships for controlling fire at scales that were, until this demonstration, thought beyond effective intervention.

In 12 multi-authored chapters, the book documents key challenges and novel options for addressing chronic landscape-scale fire management issues in north Australian savannas through development of collaborative, cross-cultural "two toolkit" approaches, and commercially supported environmental services programs.

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