

Indigenous savanna burning Cape York, North Queensland Case study



Fast facts

Location: Wik & Kugu land, South of Aurukun, Cape York, North Queensland

Carbon farming method: Savanna burning

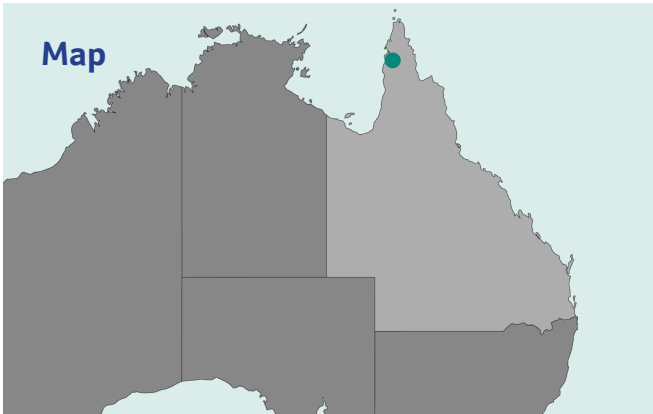
Project collaborators: Aboriginal Carbon Foundation and Aak Puul Ngantam (APN) Cape York

Australian Carbon Credit Units traded: 10,000

Australian Carbon Credit Units total credits issued: 143,722

Contract period with federal government: Commenced November 2015

Map



OVERVIEW

A project collaboration involving Indigenous rangers in Cape York, North Queensland, and the Aboriginal Carbon Foundation, is making use of traditional land management practices through burning.

In Australia's savannas, high intensity and late dry season fires can be devastating to the environment and are credited as being responsible for three per cent of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions, compared with low intensity and early dry season fires.

Traditional Owners have been burning savanna land early in the dry season for thousands of years to avoid late-season bush fires. Savanna burning practices undertaken by Traditional Owners and Aboriginal rangers reduce greenhouse emissions by undertaking cool, lower-intensity fires in the early dry season when the vegetation still contains some moisture from the wet season.

SUPPORTING CLIMATE CHANGE SOLUTIONS AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The community of Aurukun is in the western region of Cape York, Far North Queensland, approximately 100km south of Weipa and 630km northwest of Cairns, and is home to around 1,200 people.

Aboriginal Carbon Foundation and Aak Puul Ngantam Cape York (APN Cape York - a not-for-profit organisation based in Aurukun) are utilising funds from a carbon farming project to improve conservation outcomes for country and help families return to traditional land.

APN employ Indigenous rangers to carry out strategic burning of savanna areas during the early dry season to reduce the risk of late dry-season wild fires. This strategy results in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and an increase in carbon stored in dead organic matter.

The project has generated carbon credits through the Federal Government's Emissions Reduction Fund, and since traded 10,000 of these credits with a national bank, earning the Traditional Owners a revenue stream.



PROJECT BENEFITS

Savanna burning in the early dry-season decreases carbon emissions and the incidence and intensity of wildfires.

Revenue earned through the sale of carbon credits is an important benefit to the community, enabling Traditional Owners to be on country so the younger generation can learn from Elders, preserve cultural knowledge, and maintain traditional land management practices.

Projects like this also bring economic and social benefits to the community including meaningful employment and increased community participation.

Other co-benefits include the protection of properties and places of cultural importance, as well as the native species of flora and fauna in the region, and the re-introduction of rare or endangered wildlife.

