South West NRM

On-Ground Project Fact Sheet

FERAL GOAT CONTROL FOR GROUNDCOVER IMPROVEMENT

Landholder Name: Peter North

Property Location & Lot on Plan: ARAKOOLA

LOT 4 TM 35

Property Outline:

(E.g. Property description, size in hectares, enterprise, annual rainfall, and current management practice)

Arakoola is located 30 kilometres north east of Bollon, in South West Queensland. It has an area of 12,860ha. The property is fully fenced, with plans to develop internal fencing to further subdivide paddocks for rotational grazing practices. Arakoola is a beef cattle breeding enterprise with a well established Brangus herd. We control join to take advantage of the optimum financial opportunities of marketing good even lines of weaner steers. The average annual rainfall is approximately 720mm. After receiving exceptional rainfall for the past two years, groundcover is currently 100% across the property, with native pasture species in abundance. The property owners, Peter and Dianna North manage the property along with their son George. Low stress stockhandling techniques utilising working kelpies are normal management practices. Peter and George also use horses when handling cattle to optimise keeping cattle in the right mind for good feed conversion rates, which relate directly to sound financial business enterprise returns.

This project is supported by South West NRM through funding from the Queensland Government's Q2 Coasts and Country and Australian Government's Caring for Our Country.

Figure 1: Property Location Map

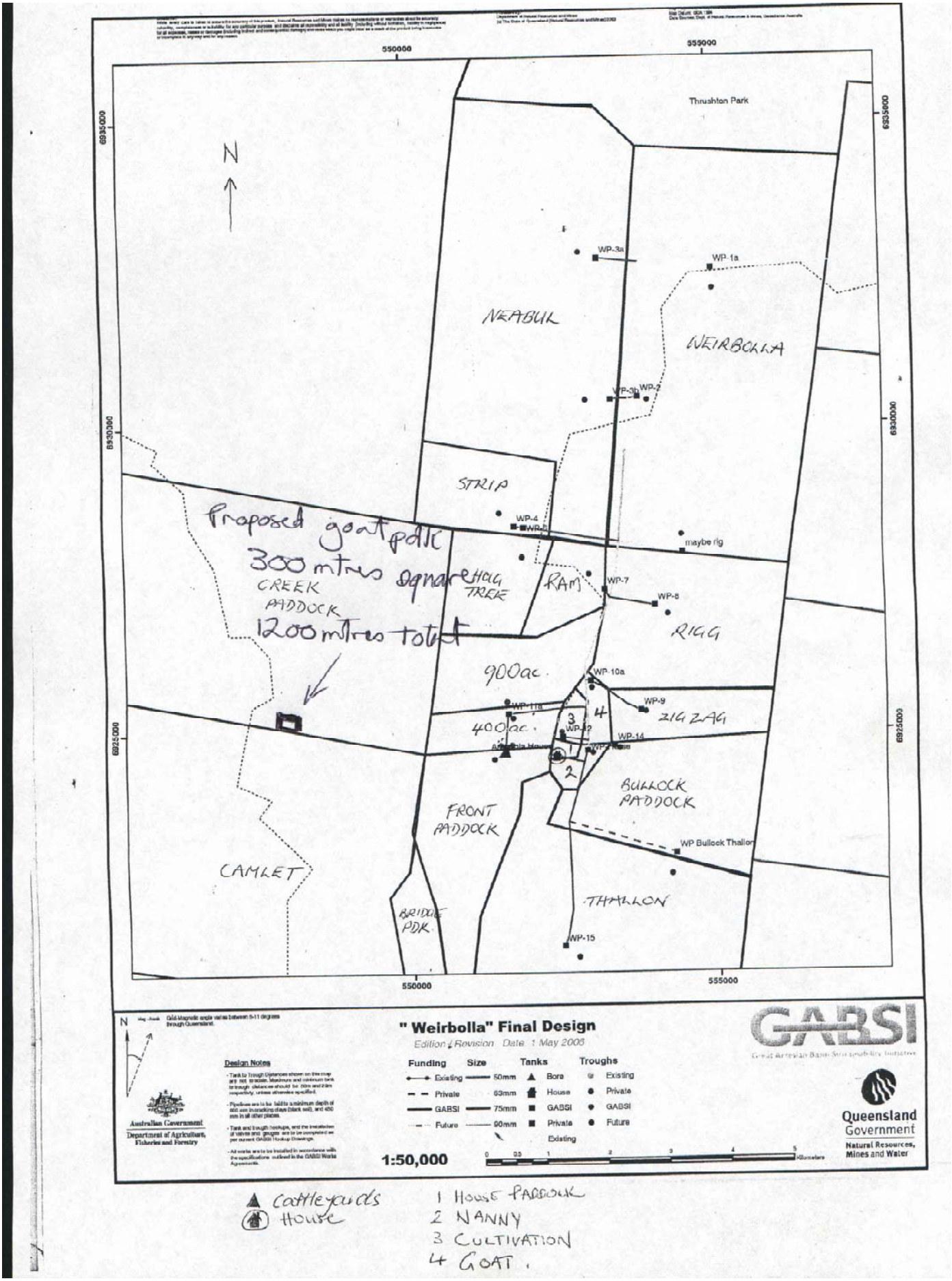

Figure 2: Project Map

Project Description

This project is to erect an enclosure to trap feral goats which are impacting on ground cover at Arakoola. The goat trapping enclosure will measure approximately 300m squared and take in an area of 33.3ha. Construction materials will be steel pegs with southern wire and an earthen ramp as the trapping mechanism. Water will be piped from an existing tank to a trough located within the trap. The trap is to be located strategically to manage goats that come in from Thrushton National Park onto the softer sweeter soils at this location. The country where the trap will be erected is a mixture of grey and red soils with semi-open poplar box, belah, mulga and sandlewood vegetation. Current methods of removing this pest animal utilising gyrocopter hire and mustering staff are costly and time consuming. This method of trapping is economically desirable and should result in improved return on investment. The project budget for funds provided by South West NRM Ltd is $8263.20.

Project Aim

This project aims to utilise the feral goat population that is contributing to our overall grazing pressure to increase cash flow and improve groundcover outcomes. The immediate area directly affected by the grazing habits of feral goats is 4047ha. Cheap effective opportunistic trapping will remove goats from grazing country and give us the ability to rest the surrounding paddocks. Cash flow will allow us to invest in infrastructure and adopt and implement grazing practices and principles as learnt in Grazing for Profit, KLR Marketing and Pasture to Pocket.

Project Outcomes

* Better control of total grazing pressure through managing goats with opportunistic trapping.
* Ability to implement rest and graze management practices.
* Removal of feral goats for commercial gain.
* Cash flow back into business for property infrastructure to implement and adopt improved grazing principles and practices studied.
* Increase in groundcover and desirable pasture species.
* The project will provide excellent return on investment.

Outputs

OG8.3 Pest Animal Control – vertebrates. 4047ha of pest control of feral goats implemented.

OG14.5 Groundcover management .2023ha of land where groundcover management practices have been adopted. 3 land managers adopting improved management practices

CB1.2 Publications.1 Fact sheet developed.

50 recipients

P5.1 Biophysical, economic or social plans

1 plan completed

Project Monitoring:

Objectives:	The objective of monitoring this project will be to identify an improvement in ground cover to paddocks surrounding the feral goat trap. This area is targeted by feral goats due to the desirable pasture species growing on the sweeter soils. Constant removal of feral goats by trapping should result in ground cover improvement and aid the establishment and persistence of desirable pasture species.
Methodology & Indicators:	Methods for monitoring will be utilising photo points to record change in landscape overtime. A transect will be used to indicate ground cover and pasture and animal species present. Records of feral goats removed will be documented by landholder. **Indicators:** 3P pasture species, percentage groundcover, pasture quantity, rainfall and land condition. **Methodology: One** Transect and two photo points, standing dry mass, feral goat presence.

Monitoring Schedule:	Establish baseline data prior to the commencement of the project.To assist project collaboration and holistic data analysis under the project, the initial collection and onforwarding to South West NRM, of rainfall and ongoing production monitoring data (e.g. no of feral goats removed / rainfall/ stocking numbers in surrounding paddocks/ improved response to rest periods), will be the responsibility of the landholder.Biophysical monitoring every six months in which South West NRM will be responsible for collecting, collating, interpreting and reporting data.One pasture monitoring transect considering pasture species and ground cover established within the project area representative of the major land type.Two photo monitoring sites within the project area representative of the major surrounding land types.Analysis: Return on Investment. Develop a case study comparing return on investment of feral goat trap compared to historical method of mustering and improvements in groundcover during rest periods for domestic stock under this project.