



Roper River

Landcare Group Inc.

Holistic Management

Explains the principles of the Holistic Management® Framework and where to find further information

What is Holistic Management?

The Holistic Management® Framework is a unique management approach focused on decision-making designed to help individuals, families, businesses and communities improve their quality of life and generate wealth, while simultaneously protecting or restoring their environment.

In developing this decision-making process, Zimbabwe-born biologist Allan Savory has worked in Africa and the Americas for over 40 years to identify and help solve the underlying problems facing people on the land.

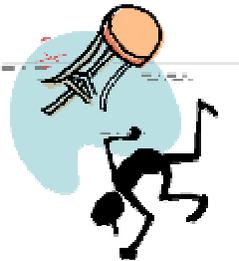
Holistic Management can provide improved profit, increased biological activity on and in the soil, and takes into account the desires of people who make decisions about the land. Holistic Management is a goal driven process that overrides our conventional (often sub-conscious) decision-making to ensure decisions are socially sound, economically sound and environmentally sound.

People – Environment – Economy

Holistic Management is all about you and your family, business and community. It is about keeping all areas of your life in balance: all areas of your life being happy and healthy. This results in healthy and happy people, healthy country, and earning enough money (from cattle or other sources) to pay for all the things you want so that you are able to look after both people and country well.

This is often described as a three legged stool with the legs representing:

1. people
2. environment
3. money (economy).

No good - unbalanced The legs of the stool are all different lengths	Good - all in balance The legs on the stool are all the same length
	
You fall off the stool People unhappy, country no good or cattle making no money	People, Country, Cattle (money) All happy and healthy

Core Components of Holistic Management

1. Holistic Goal
2. Financial Planning
3. Land Planning
4. Grazing Planning
5. Biological monitoring

Holistic Goal – what we want

Quality of Life. Our values, what is important to us.

Forms of Production. What we must do to keep having this quality of life.

Future Resource Base. What our country and community must be like so that we can experience the quality of life we want.



healthy land.
healthy profits.

Allan Savory's 4 Key Insights Of Holistic Management

1. Holistic perspective is essential to management.
2. Environments can be classified brittle to non-brittle based on the annual frequency of humidity. Brittle land deteriorates when rested. Non-brittle land does not.
3. On brittle-tending land, high numbers of herding animals (concentrated and moving) do more good than harm.
4. Over-grazing is a factor of time – grazing of plants for TOO long, not simply too many animals!

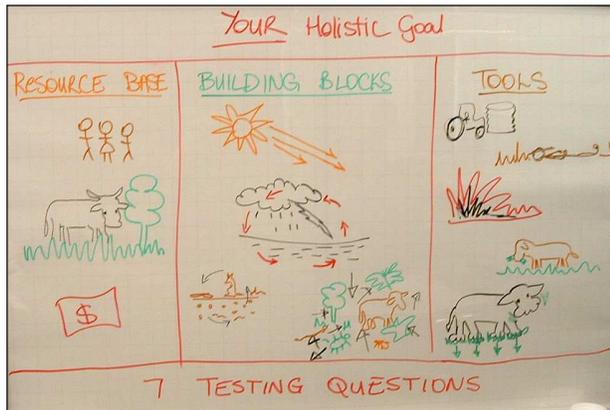
History indicates when agriculture fails, all businesses fail. Despite increasing agricultural production through advancing science and technology, land continues to deteriorate. Problems such as soil erosion, declining river health, salinity, weed and insect outbreaks, increasing frequency and severity of floods and droughts, increasing inputs and declining profitability are all indicators that we need a different approach to sustain our resource base.

Test our decisions towards our Holistic Goal

Will our decision take us closer or further away from our Holistic Goal?

Does our decision look after our people and our country? Is it the best use of our money?

Testing decisions against our Holistic Goal allows for open discussion so that all decision makers can have a say and consider their choices. It reduces conflict and fights because it is working towards what we all want – our shared Holistic Goal.



Biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to the variety of all life forms including all the different species of plants, animals and other organisms, variations within species, their different habitats and processes they are part of.

The more Biodiversity (the more different types of animals and plants happily living together) the healthier that country is.

It is important to have a continuum of young to old individuals within species co-existing.

Biodiversity Loss causes things to go wrong

When biodiversity decreases (when some types of animals or plants are removed or reduced) the country is no longer in balance. Things start to go wrong.

Biodiversity loss leads to:

- soil erosion
- drying up of springs, dams, bores, rivers
- more floods, more droughts, more bad fires
- bad weeds, pests and ferals
- unhappy people: poverty, disease.

Building Blocks of our Country – Ecosystem Foundation

1. **Water Cycle.** The effective use of rain.
2. **Mineral Cycle.** Plants, animals and microbes moving nutrients around.
3. **Energy Flow.** The sun giving plants energy to grow (photosynthesis). In turn the plants feed everything else and pass on the sun's energy.
4. **Community Dynamics.** How all animals and plants (including insects and soil bugs) positively work together and interact.

Without all four elements functioning effectively nothing can be sustained long term.

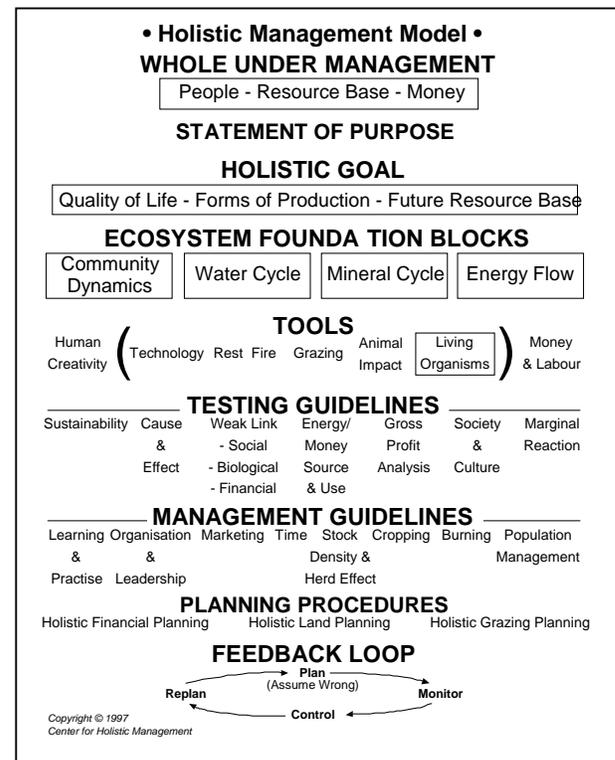
How can we help fix country?

We have six tools (or six ways) by which we can alter our landscape.

1. **Technology**
Dozers, fences, water pumps, herbicides and all other man-made items
2. **Fire**
3. **Rest**
Removing or greatly reducing grazing of country. Non-brittle environments improve with rest but in brittle country such as much of north Australia's rangeland, rest causes country to deteriorate.
4. **Living Organisms**
Understanding the interactions of animals and plants and using them to help create desired outcomes
5. **Grazing**
Using grass eating animals (eg cows and horses) to encourage plant growth. This cannot be used continually on the same grass. Graze for a short time then let the grass regrow.
6. **Animal Impact**
The animals' hooves knock down old grasses and shrubs and turn the soil making way for fresh shoots and new growth. High densities of animals are used but only for a very short time.

All tools require MONEY, CREATIVITY or LABOUR.

No tool is better or worse than any other. All can be used for good or bad. You should never use one tool all the time – use the tool or combination of tools best suited to take you closer to your desired landscape, utilizing what you have. You need to work out how to best use the tools that will take you and your country where you want to go (i.e. closer to your Holistic Goal).



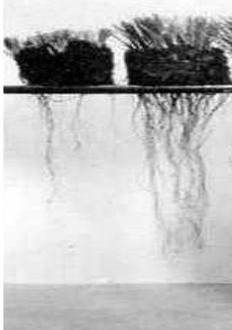
Grazing Planning

Cattle in the right place; at the right time; for the right reasons

Grazing and overgrazing

Overgrazing is a function of time, *NOT* animal numbers. Damage from overgrazing occurs when the plant is trying to grow but an animal keeps eating it again. The plant needs to continually draw on the energy from its roots to grow.

Plants use their green leaves to draw energy from the sun and grow (photosynthesis). If they do not have enough green leaves they can only continue to grow from energy stored in their roots. When the energy stored in their roots is exhausted, the plants will die.

Healthy Plant Lots of leaf and roots	Overgrazed Plant Little leaf, little root
	
<p>(Photos: HMI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cow eats the grass • cow is removed so that grass can regrow • roots remain healthy • grass grows bigger and better and can feed cow for longer • cow eats the grass • repeat the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cow eats the grass • grass re-grows • cow eats the grass • grass uses root energy to regrow • cow eats the grass • grass has no energy left • grass dies
Planned grazing	Constant grazing
Cows all in one mob and only in one paddock at a time. They keep moving onto fresh paddocks on a regular basis as per plan.	Cows are in many mobs spread out across many paddocks. They stay in those paddocks all year round.
Plants have time to recover before they are re-grazed and therefore more feed is grown and can run more cows.	Plants are not protected from being overgrazed. Need to carry fewer cattle to keep country ok.
Requires detailed planning and constant monitoring.	Requires little planning. Cows can basically look after themselves.
Cows learn to work as a herd	Cows are often in scattered groups
Country keeps getting better; biodiversity and perennial grasses increase.	Country eventually gets worse. Good grasses eventually decline.
	
<p><i>Kachana, Nov 2005</i> <i>Ten years of planned grazing</i> <i>(Photo: Henggeler collection)</i></p>	<p><i>Kachana, Nov 1992</i> <i>Uncontrolled constant stocking</i> <i>(Photo: Henggeler collection)</i></p>

Overgrazing occurs when:

- animals stay too long on fast growing plants
- animals return too soon to slow growing plants

Difficulties of planned grazing

Planned grazing may require a paradigm shift away from conventional grazing regimes.

Having large mobs of cattle working together can require changes to management, infrastructure and animal husbandry techniques. Adequate safe and reliable water supply and cleaning large scrub paddocks of cattle are some of the challenges. There is a large network (local, national and international) of people who have met these challenges successfully and overcome them using a variety of solutions under a range of conditions.

What are the benefits of planning our grazing?

- Healthier country, healthier cattle
- Reducing overgrazing of plants
- Sequestration of atmospheric carbon into our soil
- Moving closer to our Holistic Goal
- People work together better because all have been involved in the decision making and planning process

Country is healthier because overgrazing of plants is minimised (especially around bores and watering points); as is over-resting of plants and soil surfaces (especially towards the back of large paddocks where grasses may be rank and/or oxidising).

Holistic Management is not a grazing system but considers your personal values in any unique and whole situation as well as the need for profitability linked to healthy land. Grazing planning however is a major component of the program, given the importance of grazing as a tool in managing land almost anywhere.

A quick note on Financial & Land Planning

The Financial Plan should be backed and supported by a well thought out Land and Grazing Plan. The Land Plan notes all new infrastructures (waters, roads and fences etc) and different land uses.

In Holistic Management expenses are categorised into three groups: wealth generating, maintenance and inescapable. It is not advised to rush in and spend huge money on capital development (Land Plan) instantly. Instead it advocates determining one's weakest link and wealth generating areas and spending first on those that will give the best marginal reaction.

The Holistic Management® Framework strongly supports an active feedback loop: Plan (but assume you may have it wrong), constantly monitor, control, and if or when necessary, re-plan.

Disclaimer:

This fact sheet does not replace a certified Holistic Management Training Package. It is merely a brief overview, focusing on Northern beef rangeland.

The views expressed in this fact sheet are not necessarily the views of the Roper River Landcare Group.

Summary

Holistic Management is a goal-driven decision-making framework that seeks to simultaneously ensure that decisions are environmentally, economically and socially sound.

Holistic Management originated through the life work of Allan Savory and Jody Butterfield in southern Africa and the Americas. It builds on the work of many scientists and land managers. It is applicable to all land systems.

Holistic Management enables the utilization of resources and tools people already own, to enhance profits and livelihoods, reduce costs, increase carrying capacity, gain maximum benefit from rainfall, reverse desertification, increase carbon sequestration, create more biologically-active soils and more productive agricultural land; and improve biodiversity and wildlife habitat.

The first northern NT Holistic Management® Training Program was offered in October 2005, with the support of Farmbis and the NRM Links Project. It was hosted in the Roper River catchment. As at the end of March 2007, four groups had undergone the training with 27 land managers from across the catchment, the NT, WA and VIC participating. Combined they manage in excess of 1,422,100 hectares (63,290 ha within the catchment).

Useful Resources

Holistic Management International/Australia

Email: hmia@holisticmanagement.org.au
www.holisticmanagement.org.au

Holistic Management International

1010 Tijeras NW
Albuquerque NM 87102 USA
Ph: 0011 1505 842 5252
Email: center@holisticmanagement.org
www.holisticmanagement.org

Certified Educator in Holistic Management®

Brian Marshall
"Tara", PO Box 300 Guyra NSW 2365
Ph: 02 6779 1927 Fax: 02 6779 1947
Email: bkmrshl@bigpond.com

Coodardie & Numul Numul Stations

Local Holistic Management practioner
The O'Brien Family
Stuart & Roper Highways, PO Box 4101, Mataranka NT 0852
Ph/fax: 08 8975 4460
Email: ctz.obrien@bigpond.com
www.coodardie.com.au (Holistic NT)

BEAR Biologics - manage from the ground up!

Bare Essential Agricultural Resource Management
Agricultural Consultant/Soil Health Educator
Sarah Fea
1 Collins Road, PO Box 958, Katherine NT 0850
Mobile: 04 3982 7927
Email: hdsjfea@bigpond.com

Kachana Station

Environmental literacy for North Australia
Chris Henggeler
Via Kununurra, WA
Ph: 08 9161 4346
www.kachana.com

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Written by Moira O'Brien and Brian Marshall, edited by Sally Sullivan for the Roper River Landcare Group Inc.

This fact sheet is one of twelve produced for the project "NRM Links: Linking people, knowledge and action in NRM". This project aims to increase research in the Roper River catchment and the uptake of research and best practice for on-ground natural resource management. The project is conducted with the support of the National Landcare Program. Other topics in the series include a catchment overview, groundwater and riparian management.

Roper River Landcare Group

PO Box 2133
Katherine NT 0851
Ph: 08 8971 1755
Fax: 08 8971 0655
Email: roperLC@bigpond.com

Moira O'Brien

Numul Numul Station
Roper Highway, POBox 4101
Mataranka NT 0852
Ph: 08 8975 4955
Email: moira.obrien@bigpond.com



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