

# Practical stage on Kachana station

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My name is Patrick von Däniken and I am a forestry student at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, Switzerland.

When I first read of the project Kachana in a report of two pages and on the Website of Kachana Pastoral Company I could not imagine, how a practical stage would be like in an environment which is so different to what I am used to in Switzerland. Three months later I was in the heart of the Kimberley to assist the project Kachana...

The first six weeks of my practical stage I moved a cattle herd with about 100 animals, put up fences and moved with the herd like a nomad.

I learnt to know the herd, and how Chris Hengglyer used the cattle herd as a management tool and the impact they have on their environment.

While moving the herd I helped create fire breaks in Savanna country and forests to reduce the risk in case of wild-fires.

Towards the end of September a bush fire moved towards Kachana. Massive fire fronts resulted and we had a 10-day-and-night-job to fight the fires. With 20 litre water-backpacks we successfully fought the flames and saved about 10 square kilometres in the main valley of Kachana including the model areas and projects around the main camp. I learnt how powerful nature is and how helpless human beings are in the face of these massive forces.

Besides the practical work I accompanied the project scientifically. First I helped organise the three-day "First Landscape Management Workshop Kachana 2002". I was invited to present a speech at the workshop. A written report and a webpage resulted from the workshop.

<http://www.westnet.com.au/satlink/KACHANA-WORKSHOP/WORKSHOP%202002.htm>

The next project involved the taking of soil samples to gain data that can be compared in the future. Dr. Elaine Ingham who visited us on Kachana gave us helpful hints for the taking of these samples and we sent the samples to the labs for a "Soil Foodweb Analysis". <http://www.soilfoodweb.com>

Towards the end of the practical stage I programmed another website for Kachana Pastoral Company: <http://www.environmental-literacy.com>

The last week of my practical stage I spent in Kununurra. I first got an insight into other projects, made a cruise on Lake Argyle, and visited the Parker Poynt Plantation and Bazza's Melon farm.

Then Lee, through her organisation Kimberley Specialists, organised some meetings for me with local departments and organisations, where I could show a PowerPoint presentation about the project Kachana and my practical stage. I visited the Kimberley Development Commission, Ord Land and Water, the Shire meeting in Wyndham, the Ag Department, ABC Radio and Waters and Rivers.

This practical stage was a great experience for me! I want to thank Chris and Danny and their families for having me and Lee for organising the Kununurra-part of my stage.

I recommend a practical stage on Kachana to everyone who wants to have a hands-on experience in landscape management. Besides preserving and protecting undamaged ecosystems it is of great importance that we try to regenerate endangered or damaged ecosystems. Our ecosystems are fragile and it is hard to fight fire and slow down floods and erosion, but if we don't start to do something, we will not make a change...

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