

Controlling Weeds with Paul



Tegan Sands, Matthew Young,
Maree Matthew and Seth Madex

Tumbarumba Public School



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants.

www.wirraminna.org

Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by Peekdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

www.envirostories.com.au

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School: Tumbarumba Public School

Local Land Heroes - Securing Our Region

In 2015, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about their 'Local Land Heroes' who are involved in pest management in the Murray and Murrumbidgee regions. These heroes are local individuals, couples, a business or industries that have made a difference in their local community by contributing to the management of pest animals and plants. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services and Riverina Local Land Services.

Local Land Heroes is part of Enviro-Stories, a PeekDesigns education program.



Local Land
Services



Australian Government



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Paul McPherson, known to his friends and work mates as 'Macca', was born in Tumbarumba, New South Wales, in 1949. He grew up on a local farm as the fourth generation farmer. He went to school at Tumbarumba Central School, where he mucked around with his mates and didn't go to university until he was forty two.



He left school at fourteen years of age to become an apprentice stockman for three years. He worked on a farm with sheep for ten years. He then moved into the timber industry for twenty years, where he became the manager. He decided he wanted to look after the environment, so he got a job at the Tumbarumba Shire Council as a member of the Environmental Team.



The environmental team Paul works with includes Tumbarumba Shire Council, Murray Landcare, Mountain Landcare, National Parks as well as the Murray and Riverina Local Land Services. This means he is dealing with weeds in the alpine areas of the Snowy Mountains, the river flats to Jingellic and the foothill areas surrounding Tumbarumba, including forestry and pastoral areas.



A weed is just a plant that is in the wrong place. Australian native plants are weeds in other countries, such as the Tea Tree in New Zealand and the Eucalypts in America. When Paul was studying to be a weed management officer, he researched St. John's Wort and how it came to be a significant weed in Tumbarumba.

Contrary to popular belief, this weed was introduced by accident rather than design. The weed was in chaff cut at Bright and was used to feed cattle in the high country. The horses used to look after the cattle were then brought back to Tumbarumba where the manure was used on a garden at Mannus. Now, St. John's Wort is seen everywhere around Tumbarumba.



St. John's Wort

Recently, a big white snail has been found at Lockhart. This white snail eats anything and everything in its path. It is believed that it has been transported on the tarps of trucks and is spreading across Australia. If people are not vigilant, and the snail spreads, this could seriously affect Australia's wheat and rice crops, not to mention all other plant industries.



Figure 1 Common White Snail

Paul works with politicians, councils and other land management services in NSW and Victoria. He tries to raise money for the environment and control of noxious weeds and pests. Paul has to keep up with the latest strategies of managing the weeds and pests. He is not afraid of finding out new information and trying new methods of weed control.



One method Paul uses in controlling weeds is the use of chemicals. Paul prefers not to use chemicals as they can affect the surrounding environment. He uses the technique of 'cut and paint' for the removal of willow trees and other exotic trees surrounding Tumbarumba. He is very active in organising a local Drum Muster for the safe disposal of old chemical drums.





He also uses environmental chemicals which have less negative effect on the environment because it isn't as strong but it still does the job. Biological control is used as well. Some environmental chemicals kill the weeds and others just stop them from spreading everywhere. Paul uses a spray on our local ovals which makes the desired grasses grow therefore reducing the weeds.



Paul is trying to teach people about plant hygiene to prevent the spreading of weeds. This means raising awareness in the community of best practice when moving stock, stock feed and transport. Paul attended a field day educating farmers and stakeholders on the latest techniques of managing weeds. This included sniffer dogs trained to locate 'hard to find weeds' such as the Orange Hawkweed.



Paul became a weed and pest management man because he wanted to look after the environment. He gets a great sense of satisfaction from working with, and for, the community. The community has acknowledged his efforts by awarding him Citizen of the Year in 2015. He is passionate about his job and says, "It is more of a hobby than a job."



Matthew Young, Seth Madex, Tegan Sands and Maree Matthew
2015 Year 5, Tumbarumba Public School

CONGRATULATIONS

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and
the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the
2015 NSW Junior Landcare Team Award and will be
competing in the 2016 National Landcare Awards.



Local Land
Services

