

Walla Walla Gum Swamp Reserve Pest Management Plan



William Klingsporn, Milly Kohlhagen,
Kelsey Lieschke, Flynt Trimble, Jesse Turner,
Antonia Wenke, Carl Wenke and Luke Wenke



Walla Walla 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: Walla Walla 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





Gum Swamp Reserve comprises a total area of 458.3 hectares and is located approximately two kilometres north of the township of Walla Walla, New South Wales.

The Reserve is mostly flat with the swamp floor dominated by grey clay, with brown clay located around the high water mark of the swamp. The swamp fills 4 years out of 10 and once full usually retains some water throughout the summer.

Two main types of vegetation in the swamp are River Red Gum Woodland, found closer to the lower areas near water, and Box-Gum Grassy woodlands that have both Yellow and Grey Box trees.

History of Rabbits

Rabbits were introduced to Australia in the 18th century with the First Fleet and became widespread after an outbreak caused by an 1859 release.

In 1907, a rabbit-proof fence was built in Western Australia in an unsuccessful attempt to contain the rabbits.

Wild European rabbits have grey-brown fur on their backs and a white-grey colour on their belly. The more variation of colour in rabbits generally indicates a higher population.

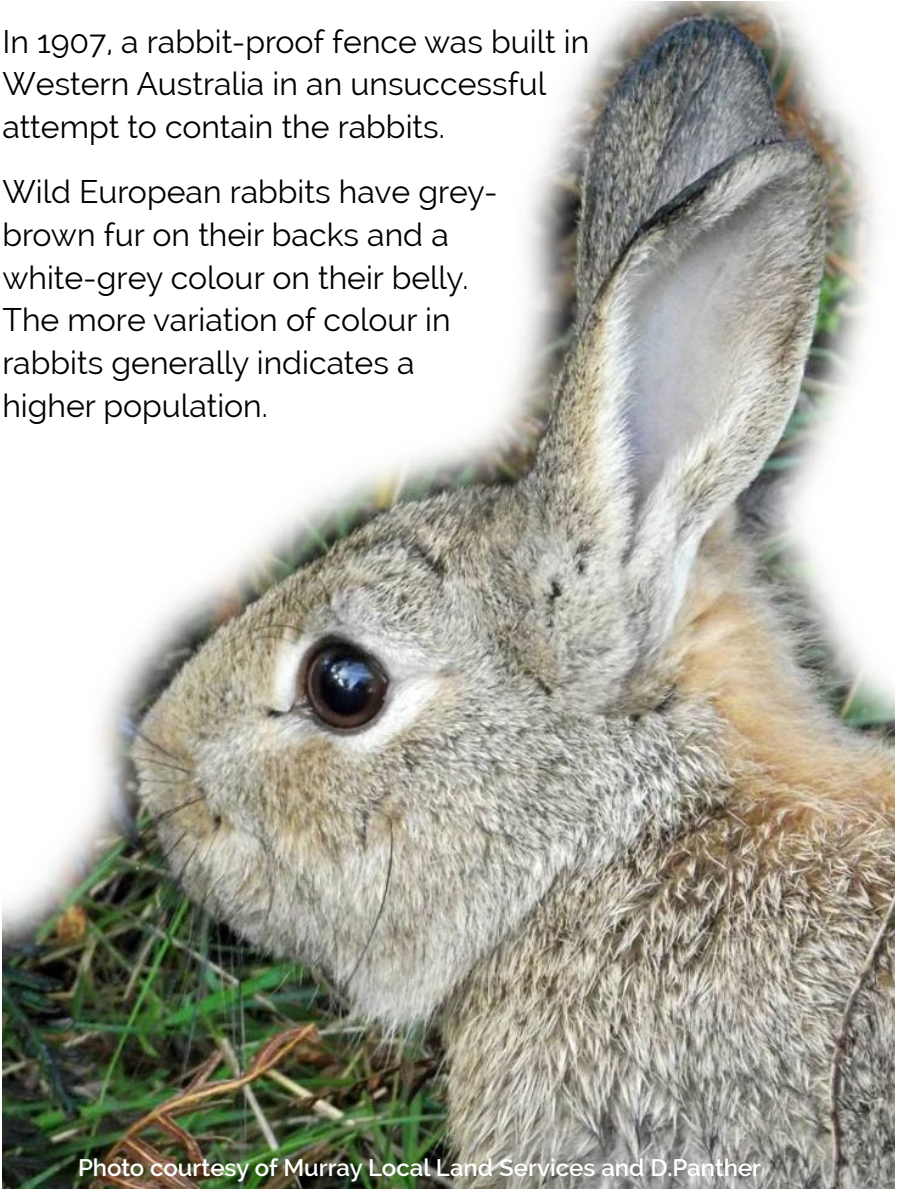


Photo courtesy of Murray Local Land Services and D.Panther



Aims and Objectives

Reduce the environmental impacts caused by rabbits located in and around Gum Swamp Reserve.

1. Assess the impact of rabbits
2. Ensure collaboration with the local shire, Gum Swamp Committee, the local community and relevant authorities.
3. Promote and implement strategic rabbit control methods
4. Maintain records of control measures and strategies implemented

Impacts caused by Rabbits

Rabbits are becoming a problem in Gum Swamp Reserve particularly due to the large numbers which already exist in this area. This was made evident by the high concentration of rabbit scats, damage to native trees and shrubs and the size and quantity of rabbit warrens.

It takes less than one rabbit per hectare to prevent the successful regeneration of many of our common native trees and shrubs. Rabbits also breed very quickly.





On Friday the 21st of August, 2015, the year 6 students of Walla Walla Public School went to Gum Swamp Reserve. When we got there, we met representatives from Murray Local Land Services. Liz, Steve and Phil came to show us different pest management strategies.

First, Steve talked to us about how to control wild dogs. He showed us how each trap worked. He also explained that when you trap a wild dog you need to use rubber seals on the soft-jaw leg-hold traps. Then he showed us the fox mechanical ejector bait and how it worked.



Liz showed us the wild pig trap and the night vision camera that was on the tree, facing the pig trap. The pig bait was a grain that was mixed in with poison. It is a safe trapping technique because the bait does not attract other animals.





Then Liz and Steve showed us a device which was hooked onto the back of a Ute. It had a plough blade attached, which made a furrow in the soil. Above that was a spinning barrel which deposited carrot bait. This baiting technique is used for the management of rabbits.

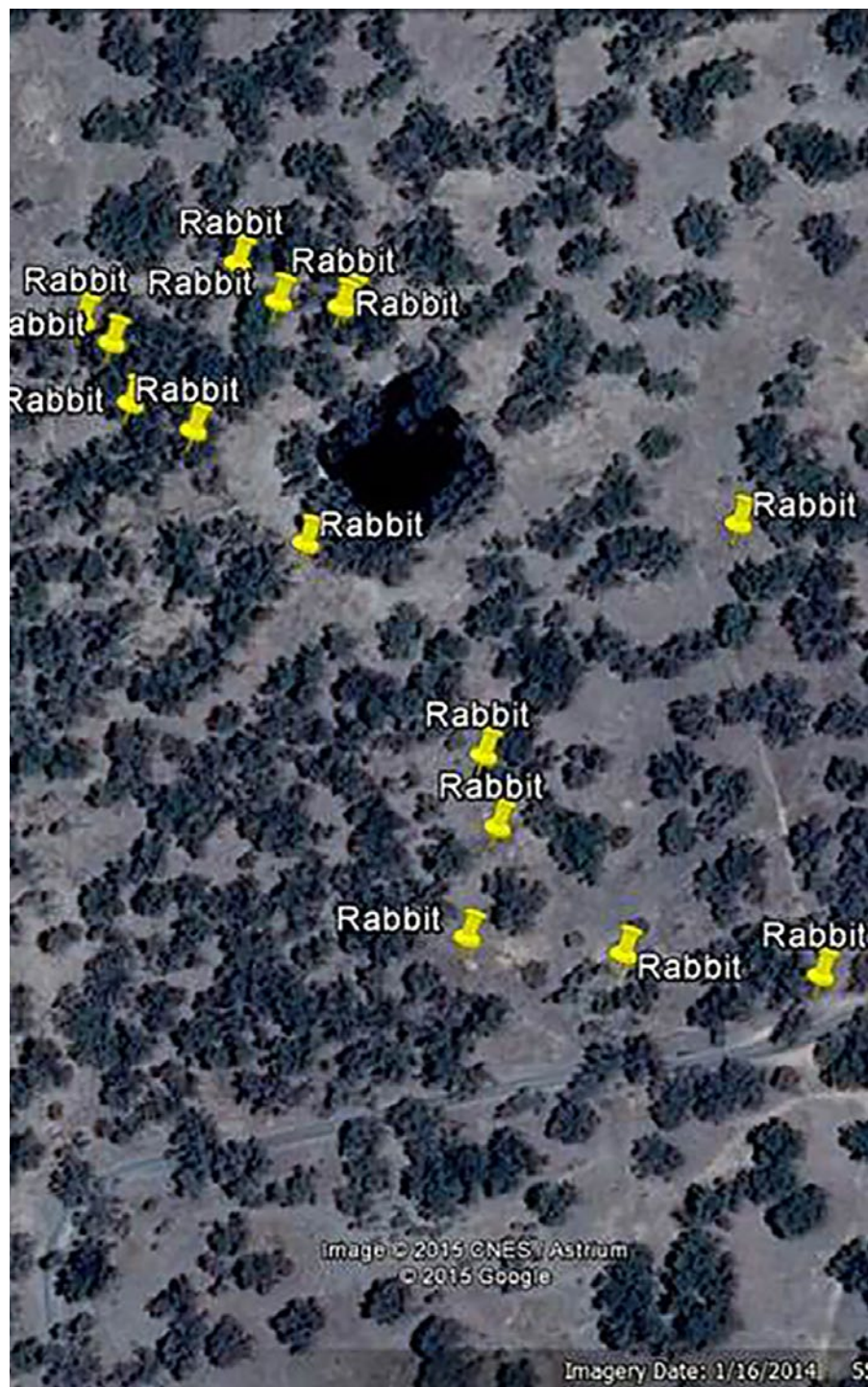
Liz then demonstrated how to smoke out rabbit burrows with a fumigator. She put a tube down one burrow, the fumigator was turned on and smoke came out of another burrow.

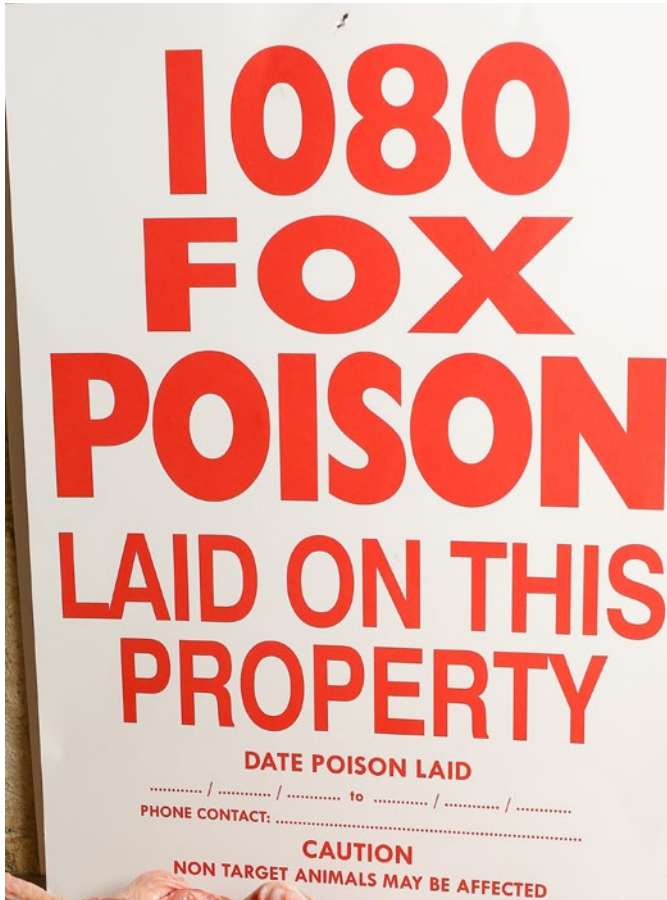




At the end, Phil demonstrated how to use GPS trackers. We got into pairs to walk around Gum Swamp Reserve and found clues of where the animals had been. We recorded waypoints on the GPS to mark evidence of pigs, foxes and rabbits that are in the area.

At school, we went on to Google Earth and marked all the waypoints on a map of the Gum Swamp Reserve. This map highlighted which pests were becoming more of a problem and assisted us to develop a pest management plan for the area.





Management Options

Baiting using 1080 in different spots.

Placing cameras to see where the pests have been. Tracks and fresh scats can also show people where the pests have been.

You need permits to poison, trap and kill pests in protected areas such as Gum Swamp Reserve. There are different ways to trap and kill pests. Most of the time the pests are trapped and poisoned.



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2015 Year 6, Walla Walla 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.

