

CASE STUDY

Northern Agricultural Catchments Council



Wannamal waterway fencing protecting both bush & livestock

Introduction

Max Smith and his family, at the suitably named farm 'Fauna Park', completed a NACC *Hidden Treasures* fencing project in mid-2014. Located 10km south of New Norcia, Western Australia, the fencing protected Wandoo Woodland on their local waterway, a tributary of the East Moore River Catchment.

The primary reason for the fencing was the need to isolate livestock from remnant vegetation alongside their waterway containing York Road Poison (*Gastrolobium calycinum*), on land bought adjoining their farm to the west. This native shrub species along with other *Gastrolobium* species has long been an issue to settlers of the district wishing to run livestock. For early settlers, hand picking the plants and broad scale clearing eliminated this risk. Now, however, land holders don't have the time or the clearing regulations to undertake these past methods, so fencing is the only practical option.

The Process

Max made contact with NACC in 2013 after hearing about the *Hidden Treasures* incentive scheme through word of mouth. A site assessment was undertaken by NACC Natural Resource Management Officer (NRMO), Rodger Walker later in the year. A site management plan and photo monitoring points for Max and management agreement was drawn up in early 2014 and duly signed.

The fencing task was straightforward and undertaken by the landholders themselves instead of contractors. Max is happy with the results and will use the photo monitoring points

for on-going assessment of the project's success.

The final site inspection visit by the NRMO enabled other natural resource management issues to be discussed with Max such as waterway weeds, fire, feral animals and fauna habitat. Knowledge was shared both ways which is the key and strength of the landcare movement.



Typical Wandoo country within the fenced area.

Value of the Site

Although the 3.5km of fencing may seem insignificant to some, it serves to protect 59 hectares of high value Wandoo Woodland with multiple benefits. The bushland's vegetation condition is very good with a diversity of species and plant age classes. Wandoo trees dominant the site with a diverse understorey, particularly on the gravelly laterite ridges and outcrops.

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The farm's waterways are a tributary of the Moore River East branch which flows downstream via Mogumber to connect to the main Moore River system. Headwaters of the creek system are naturally steep, becoming gentler in slope with winter water-logged areas downstream. With a north-south orientation, the creek-bed and banks provide an important shaded gully refuge for fauna and flora.



Creek bed within a sheltered gully system.

By excluding stock from these sites, wandering stock and subsequent soil erosion of the steep gully banks caused by wandering stock prevented; generation of palatable understorey shrubs is increased, stock losses from poison plant ingestion is eliminated; and overall water quality of the waterway is enhanced. Water quality has added importance for the landholder as they use downstream dams for stock drinking needs.

Locally, the remnant bushland provides connectivity to properties north and south, extending wildlife and flora corridors. Sites like these are important habitat areas for the endangered Carnaby's Black Cockatoo. Some of the larger trees in the farm's creek system have hollows that may historically or recently have been used as nest trees by adult bird pairs.

The Future

Completion of these works ensures all the farm's waterways are fenced off. For the future Max would like to upgrade existing fences include some waterway ones as they are getting on in age and strength.

Max's message for other land holders is simple and clear: "If your bushland needs fencing, don't hesitate to apply for funding for its protection."



Fence and site monitoring tags.

For more information:

For more information please contact Rodger Walker, NACC Natural Resource Management Officer, on (08) 9652 0872 or at rodger.walker@nacc.com.au

