

1117 kids visit Peach Flat wetland

Sounds like a lot of visitors! Actually, it was 55 kids plus their teachers and willing helpers (including parents) from the Briagolong Primary School (the school number is 1117).

On 5 May 2011 these folk gathered at Peach Flat & Community Wetland for a Bug Blitz field day. What excitement! The children were divided into 4 groups and they rotated through 4 different activities spread across the wetland.



Collecting cumbungi (bullrush).
Rod McMillan, co-owner of Peach Flat, showed the kids the role that cumbungi plays in the wetland habitat, how it is harvested and controlled and how it is used as mulch. The kids were able to get into the water and collect some cumbungi for themselves ... for another activity.



Making paper using cumbungi.
Professional paper-maker, Marianne Little showed the kids how to make hand-made paper using chopped up, cooked and treated cumbungi. (She prepared this ahead of time using cumbungi from Peach Flat). The kids were then able to make paper for themselves under Marianne's watchful eye. The paper was hung out to dry in readiness for another activity.





Pressing plants. Michèle Adler, co-owner of Peach Flat, took the kids on a wander to collect plants for pressing and drying. She showed the kids how to lay out the plant parts so that they will dry properly. A couple of weeks and back at school, Michèle helped the kids mount their dried plant specimens on the hand-made cumbungi paper complete with the correct scientific names. Later, the mounted specimens went on public display in a travelling exhibition.



Bug Blitzing. Local naturalist and scientist, Ron (Dingo) Reed, led the kids on a hunt for things wriggly and small - beetles, millipedes, caterpillars, butterflies, spiders, lizards, and lots more. These wonderful creatures were found under logs and bark, in the grass and along the edge of the wetlands. They were photographed by John Caldwell (BugBlitz regional co-ordinator) and the 'Press', identified and then released back into the environment.





After lunch, the whole entourage explored along (and through) George Creek.



It was a wonderful Bug Blitz field day and credit must go to all people who participated - children, teachers, parents and helpers alike. A special congrats to John Caldow, Bug Blitz co-ordinator, for making it all come together on the day. Finally, the trustees of the Hugh Williamson Foundation, who fund Bug Blitz field days, would be delighted in achieving their aims - a place where science, the arts, language, technology, math and civics collide. It really did.