

Goroke P-12, Western Victoria 2009

Students Year 9 Leadership Program – 9 students

Background

The TLfS program was run as part of the Year 9 leadership course. Although there was some overlap with the leadership activities in our Advanced program, the Principal did not see this as a problem as she likes programs to be cross curriculum.

Process

Minimay is a 201 hectare property situated in Victoria's West Wimmera region that was purchased as part of a corporate Conservation Landbank. It is situated only 20 minutes from Goroke. This site was the focus of the TLfS program and its student projects. The objective was to set up a long term project that could be carried on by future Year 9 students in the years to come. It is an important element of the long-term planning for the school and acts as an outside classroom for Goroke students.

Partnerships

Trust for Nature (TfN) was an integral part of the TLfS program at Goroke thanks to the efforts of Adam Blake, a local TFN representative and keen conservationist.

WaterWatch

Kowree Tree Group

Projects

Conservation at Minimay

– The students decided to focus on two hypotheses at Minimay:

1. That nesting boxes in revegetation areas will be used more frequently than in old growth areas
2. That revegetation for biodiversity affects soil moisture and results in changes to invertebrate density and composition

Feedback

We have observed some changes in the students, including:

- There is now some anticipation of what will happen
- They are identifying each other's strengths
- There is more teamwork/sharing the workload
- They are becoming more considerate of others
- There is already strong cohesion in the group
- The students love the Minimay project

Some of the benefits of the TLfS program have been:

- Having someone from an outside group, such as TfN has helped. We wouldn't have known what to do without him.
- It has given vibe to the classroom – very energetic, integral to success, motivates kids.
- The students like to start and finish the project – they would like to have an honour roll for this project.
- We plan to continue this as a long term project
- Minimay will operate as an off campus learning space – a special venue for senior students to have some ownership of and responsibility for whilst they are learning.
- Our interest in having Minimay as a learning space for our students has resulted in plans for construction of a classroom/education site.
- **TLfS provides a framework for learning – even if there was no Minimay project, we would look at something else.**

Concepts submitted by Jill Colley

Summary

With the help of Adam Blake and Fiona Copley from Trust for Nature, the students chose to set up an ongoing project involving habitat enhancement and monitoring on a block of land at Minimay owned by MECU finance institution. The Minimay Block is about 20 minutes from Goroke and this area has one of the last remaining food supplies Stringybark and Buloke for the rare South-eastern Red-tailed Black Cockatoo.

After deciding on their hypotheses, the students set up two study transects at Minimay, measuring 50 x 50 metres. They also designed their own observation sheets to record their observations. Several times throughout the year the students measured and recorded soil moisture and Ph, weather conditions and insect numbers. They also learnt about the various cloud types and passed their knowledge onto the grade 5/6 class.

With assistance from members of the Kowree Tree Group and Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water the students were involved in the direct seeding of Buloke trees and habitat monitoring.

Early in 2010 these students will hand over their program to the following Year 9 students to continue on with this long-term project.

