

# Managing Grassland Ecosystems: Student Worksheet



Elsbeth Swan ©

## Activity 1

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### Managing grassland ecosystems – Aboriginal land use

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(Level 4)

## Managing grassland ecosystems

Prior to European settlement grasslands extended over the Western Volcanic Plains in Victoria. Grasslands across the Western Volcanic Plains are now listed as Critically Endangered.

1. On the left is a list of threats to grasslands. Find and match the threat with the negative impact on the environment.

Introduction of feral animals

Soil is compacted and native grasses are eaten by cattle

Introduction of exotic plants

Habitat is removed when rocks are disturbed and removed

Over-grazing of native plants by cattle

The development of buildings, houses and roads has resulted in the loss of native plants and animals

Fertiliser is applied to the grasses

Exotic plants compete with native plants

Rocks are removed

Dams and weirs have been constructed along some rivers and streams, which have altered the natural flow

Urbanisation and development

Introduced animals compete with native animals and damage the landscape

Changed water use

A reduced amount of fire reduces diversity of plants in grasslands

Lack of fire

Fertilisers may kill native plants

2. List two ways grasslands can be managed.

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_

Follow the instructions and complete the BWVP Managing Grasslands online learning activity. This activity simulates how to manage a degraded grassland site.

3. Once you have completed the activity, list your suggestions for managing the site.

i. Weed Management: \_\_\_\_\_

ii. Site Access: \_\_\_\_\_

iii. Feral Animal Management: \_\_\_\_\_

iv. Vegetation Restoration: \_\_\_\_\_

v. Fauna Reintroductions: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What was your overall assessment?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Why are weeds a problem in grasslands?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why is a predator-proof fence so effective?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Circle the feral animals from the following list:

Foxes

Rabbits

Bandicoots

Hares

Kangaroos

Feral cats

Feral dogs

Cockatoos

8. What impact do feral animals have on grasslands?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Why is it important to manage weeds, grazing and vehicles when reintroducing native plants?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Why is it important to reintroduce native animals last?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Aboriginal land use

Aboriginal people have lived on this land for thousands of years. You will explore how they lived successfully and sustainably for so many years. Read the information found in the PowerPoint 'Aboriginal land uses' and answer the following questions.

11. Aboriginal people sourced all their clothes, food and tools from the land. True or False.

\_\_\_\_\_

12. What were the roles of Aboriginal men, women and children?

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13. What was the most common food source?

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14. Grasses were used to make flour, for binding and basket weaving. Suggest the objects that could have been carried from camp to camp in baskets?

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15. Manna gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) was used for making tools and medicines. How did Aboriginal people use the wood and bark?

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16. Golden wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) was used for making string from the bark. How might Aboriginal people have removed the bark without harming the tree?

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17. How would you have survived in Australia 1000 years ago? What are the basic things you would have needed?

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## Conclusion

18. When managing a grassland ecosystem, what needs to occur to ensure the successful reintroduction of native animals to the site?

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19. What is one thing we can learn from Aboriginal people about how to manage grasslands?

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20. Explain how Aboriginal people were able to live off the land for thousands of years without damaging the environment.

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