

Youth Voice for Maize Island

In 2015, members of the River Murray Youth Council (RMYC), a youth environmental leadership group, visited Maize Island Lagoon Conservation Park to learn about pest control and park management. The value of this local park really resonated with the group so members helped to develop a strategic plan to raise the profile of the park. Some old off-road driving tracks have been given a new purpose, becoming a walking trail dedicated to a passionate member of the Waikerie community and advocate for the park, Peter Jacobs. Peter was a local community member who was also a passionate protector of the environment and dedicated much of his time to conserving this special place. The project has been managed by the students including mapping the trail, installing bollards and designing the interpretive signs on a topic chosen by them. Together with their collaborative partners, Riverland West Landcare and Rotary Club of Waikerie, the RMYC members will have on-going input into the future management of Maize Island.

The 'Youth Voice for Maize Island' project is supported by the Department for Environment and Water through funding from the joint Australian and South Australian governments' Riverine Recovery Project.



 Peter Jacobs Walking Trail

 Maize Island Lagoon Conservation Park

 Sealed road

 Unsealed road

 Vehicular Track

The trail is a 2.4 km loop with a combination of sandy and clay soils. The start of the trail is approximately 300 metres from the Law Road entrance to the park, over the bridge, on your left.



Learn more about the Youth Voice for Maize Island project

For more information please visit www.parks.sa.gov.au



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Peter Jacobs Trail

Maize Island Lagoon Conservation Park



Maize Island – past and present

By Loxton High School student, *William Gillett*
(in collaboration with *Claudi Jacobs and Ian Oliver*)

Maize Island was originally part of a large agricultural property and was planted with crops such as strawberries, peaches, oranges and vegetables. Unfortunately the 1956 flood wiped out all the crops and it was clear that using the area for agriculture was no longer viable. Maize Island was declared a conservation park in 1966. Large portions of the park are low-lying and were subject to regular flooding prior to the control of water levels – hence having the word ‘island’ in its name.

Threatened species

By Waikerie High School students, *Grace Nayda and Amy Raines* (in collaboration with *Kevin Smith*)

The yellow anther flax lily and regent parrot are two threatened species found at Maize Island. The lily flowers in October and can be found growing on sandy soils. The regent parrot looks very similar to the yellow rosella but features an orange beak, no blue facial markings and a longer tail.

Wildlife at Maize Island

By Renmark High School student, *Mitchell Kroemer*
(in collaboration with *Teresa Ter Bogt*)

Lizards such as lace monitors, bearded dragons, sleepy lizards and water skinks call Maize Island home. Wetland birds such as swamp hens, darters, pelicans, black swans and ducks live or nest on the water and mostly eat small fish, reeds and grasses. Looking up into the trees you may see colourful birds such as regent parrots, grass parrots (red-rumped parrot), yellow rosellas and honey eaters.

Environmental watering

By Renmark High School student, *Kirra Demtchuk*

The constant river level and altered water flow have impacted on the health of the river’s wetlands and floodplains. Environmental water is used to fill wetlands, mimicking natural wetting events, and then wetlands are allowed to dry out just like they would have in a natural environment.

Floodplain vegetation

By Loxton High School student, *Callum Isaacs*

Black box woodlands occur in a range of habitats such as floodplains of major rivers, ephemeral lakes, and small creeks and channels. They provide important shelter and protection for many species, particularly ground foraging and hollow-nesting fauna. Black box are long-lived with some individual trees estimated to be 250 years old.

Plant ecology

By Loxton High School student, *Ayla Reid*

Black box, hop bush, saltbush and rounded pig face can be found along the trail. Black box provide nectar for bees, hop bush flowers are wind pollinated, saltbush are drought hardy plants and rounded pig face provide shelter for small lizards whilst other small animals eat the flowers and fruit.

River red gums

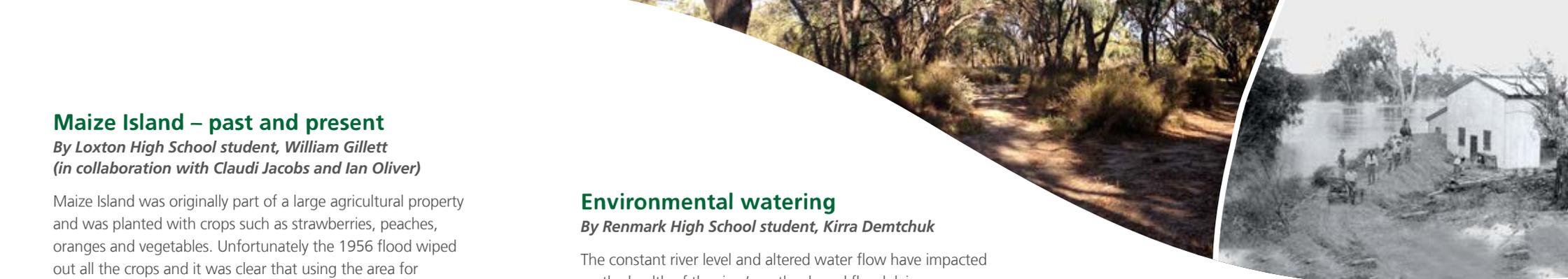
By Glossop High School student, *Accacia Verco*

River red gums are often found by the water or near the bank of a river, and live to more than 700 years old. They rely on flood waters to spread their seeds by washing them to high ground to germinate and grow before the next flood comes.

Pest plant and animals

By Glossop High School student, *Kaleb Ivanovic*

Pest plants and animals can be a significant threat to the natural environment. Key pest species found at Maize Island are foxes, rabbits and African boxthorn. It’s important to control foxes because they are one of the pest animals that has contributed to the loss of nearly 60% of the small mammal species in Australia. Rabbits cause damage in our national parks by grazing native vegetation. Twelve rabbits can eat the same amount of food as one sheep! African boxthorn is an introduced pest plant that competes with native vegetation for space and nutrients. It is important to control African boxthorn as the red berries are attractive to birds, who spread the seed.



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