PRACTICALITIES


VERMIN PROOF FENCING

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OUR interest in this area has evolved over the past few years and is now a five year project on 'the list'. We offer our ideas here for suggestion and comment from other people in *Land for Wildlife*. The reasons for proceeding in our case are threefold: -

1 nature conservation reasons - we have recently placed a conservation covenant over the block
2 production reasons - we grow Proteas commercially and look forward to excluding most kangaroos and all rabbits
3 privacy reasons - we live in a high tourist visitation area (the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge) and often have uninvited visitors; the introduction of dieback is also an issue.

Vermin proof fences can never be considered absolute; they do have to be well maintained and periodically checked for breaches. Fencing costs vary enormously depending upon their design, quality of materials used and whether you build it yourself or have it contracted out. We chose to build the best possible affordable design using good quality second hand materials and our own labour. We are fencing 1.7kms to enclose 45 acres, fortunately mostly on well-drained sands, but we do have a substantial creek to cross twice, plus one small winter creek.

Our choice? ... you can see by the sketches we are very confident of suceeding! We think we will use 1.8m standard hingemesh, an apron along the ground and up the fence plus an electrified overhang, all suspended on 40mm galvanised water pipe uprights 3 m apart (Figs. 1 and 2). To date we have built nothing, but we have started to collect all the materials needed. Can anyone offer comment and suggest anything that might be better or simpler to build?

Materials to be used:

- 50x50x3.2gge galv. hingemesh 1.8 m high. We have currently salvaged 0.7 km from various sources. For aesthetic reasons we will buy new material (black plastic coated) for erecting adjacent to our main entrance.
- the 40mm galv. pipe (plus larger sizes for strainers and creek crossings) is a big scrounge! So far we have well over half of the 630x3m uprights needed - small bits here and there all add up and are at least a third the cost of new material.
- plain fencing wire: we plan to buy the new 'life wire' on the market as once wire is in the fence it will be difficult to replace.
- insulators: we propose to drill all uprights to take the wire. Each hole will have inserted a 4mm HD poly pipe (with the tool shown) with ends sticking out 30mm to stop short circuits. Corners will be different, requiring a stout arrangement to take the strain ..... ideas?

- creek crossings: our fence must cross a creek that is prone to flash flooding. We will be installing twin concrete culverts 1050mm diameter. The sketches (Fig. 3) show the broad idea - fence over the top and a grille at the pipe exit to stop entry. Finer points that are not obvious in the sketch:-

  2m out from the culvert pipe entrance will be a low 0.5m mesh/ grille to catch debris in low/ moderate flow conditions. This can be manually cleaned as required - we anticipate annually due to the vegetated nature of the creek upstream.

The exit grille is hinged at the top, the end of the culvert is cut at 45° and the bottom third of the grille ends underwater (see fig. 4) with a gap below to allow debris in a flood to pass freely. The gap would be plugged in the dry.

The project is a big one for us as we both currently work full time. We are aware of a few other local properties going down a similar path and encourage others to take up the challenge. We look forward to feedback and can be contacted at PO Box 77, Yallingup, 6282, or phone/fax 9755 2189 or email: neilta@gov.wa.au

Figure 4

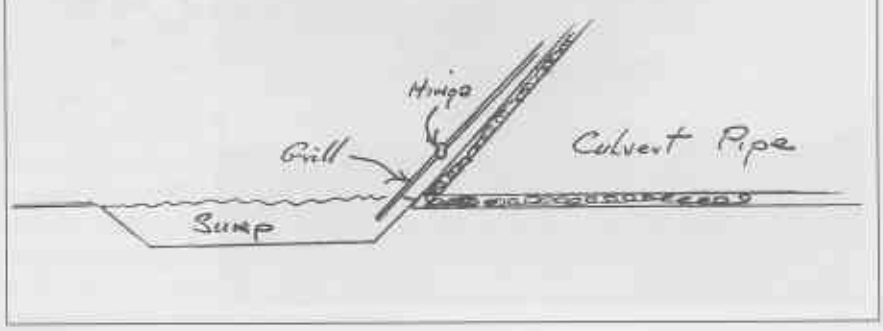

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Figure 1

Side Profile Av. Post.

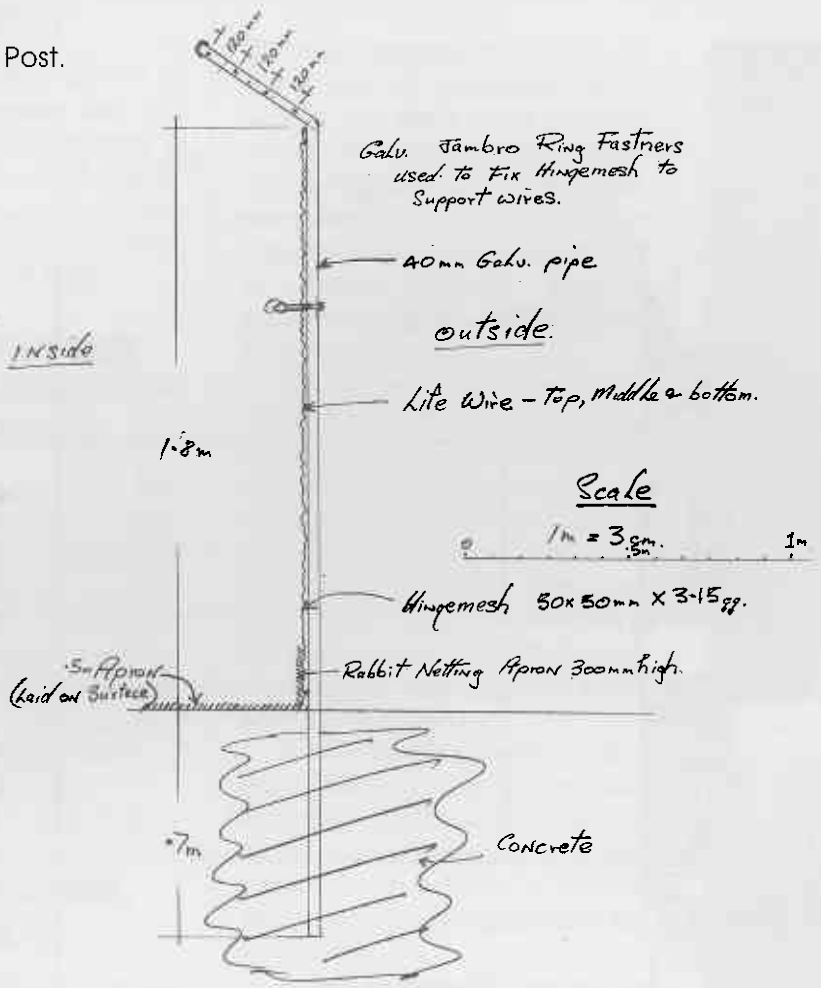
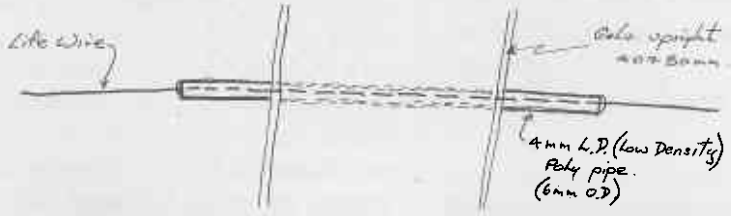


Figure 2

Electrification Detail: *not to scale*

(Power source will be mains using an off the shelf Electric Fence energiser)

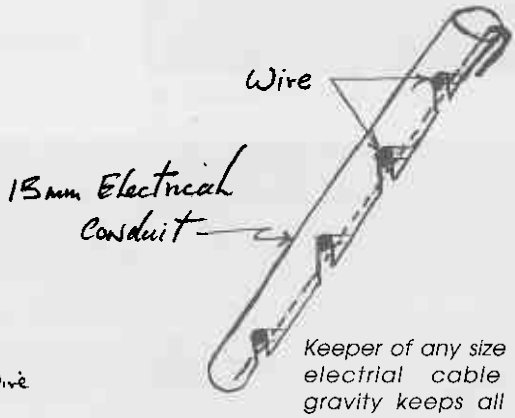


Notes:
6mm hole drilled in pipe
Black poly insulator inserted protruding out each edge by 30mm
Black poly insulates and seeks upright so that no water runs down the wire and is deposited inside upright
Tool to push in poly to get tight fit

Std. Fencing technique of going underground below gates will be used - Isolating Switches will be used to enable the fence to be "broken up" into sections for maintenance purposes.

Insulator to keep wires exact distances apart between uprights

not to scale



Keeper of any size of electrial cable - gravity keeps all in place.

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Figure 3
Major Creek Crossings TYPE 1