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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter September 2002

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaean.net>

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Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. Other than the reports from the AGM and the latest activity, there is very little to pass on this month. Correspondence includes the Under Control pest management newsletter (June 2002 edition) from DNRE and a couple of invitations to participate in some seminars to improve all those marketing, promotional, budgeting and other management skills that everyone starts backing away from when inquiries are made for interested participants! Also, Ken Harris tells me that the floral index on the website is now complete and should give you the precise locations of all the known plants in the Park.

September Activity

This month's activity will be held on Sunday, September 15. Just for something different from the normal slave labour, there will be no work allowed (Well, maybe just a little)! Instead, we will undertake a bit of exploration out towards the western boundary and beyond, perhaps do a reconnoitre for a new track route. So, be at the Kerry Road Picnic Area at 10am with suitable walking attire on board to make like Burke and Wills, but without the sticky ending. A car shuffle may be required to Brewster's Road, depending on our yet to be decided agenda.

Tree Planting Finale

By Cathy Beamish

August's activity ended up turning into a comedy of errors. It started out normally enough with everyone meeting at the Braniff's Road carpark where we also met up with Scouts from 1st Churchill Scout Troop. They had come along to give us a hand with the last tree planting of the year. Everyone was keen to get going. The Scouts had split up into five groups and were to be supervised by the members of the Friends group. We all walked down the track with Rob following in the 4WD towing the trailer, until we came to the first small area to be planted. Rob explained to the Scouts what was going to happen and we all then set about the process of tree planting. The Scouts did a great job and I found after a while that the group I was working with had discovered which job they preferred and they began working like a real team. From the initial small planting area we then kept walking until we came to the base of Clematis track, where we found oodles of guards and stakes waiting for all the keen planters. On the higher parts of the slope the ground was a bit hard and proved to be a bit challenging for the Scouts when it came to digging the hole, but with help from the expert tree diggers from the Friends group, we finally managed to get everything done.

From the slopes we kept walking around to Potato Flat where we found more guards and stakes. By this time the Scouts knew what they were doing and most of them got stuck into the planting. But, there was a distraction. A sheep had been found in the river up against the embankment. It looked like it was stuck between the embankment and the roots that were hanging down. It was amusing to watch the Scout Leaders trying to come up with ways to coerce the sheep to move. They had quite a few onlookers (myself included) but they didn't manage to rescue the sheep. Rob was going to have to do that the next day.

After a quick drink and a bite to eat, I managed to get the Scouts back into the business of tree planting. Rob and Ken had taken off in the 4WD and I assumed they were about to get the BBQ organised for

our lunch. Unfortunately, when we rounded the next bend on our way to the weir, there before our weary eyes was another large patch of tree guards awaiting us. The chorus of groans that went up was just about unanimous! I decided that it was going to take too much effort to encourage the Scouts to regain enough enthusiasm to plant the trees carefully, although I have to admit that I had had enough as well! So after some discussion with the Scout Leaders and the Friends, it was decided that we would continue walking around to the weir and have our BBQ and come back and finish planting the trees once everyone had been fed and rested.

Good idea, bad timing. Unfortunately Rob wasn't expecting us for another half an hour, so consequently he hadn't had time to set up the BBQ. Luckily everyone had brought their lunch with them (except Rob), so we all got stuck into our sandwiches while Rob tried to get the BBQ going. And tried and TRIED. Unfortunately, the regulator had rusted out and neither Rob nor the Scout Leader was able to fix it. So...Rob decided that he would go into Morwell and buy a new one and while he was gone we would all go back and finish the tree planting with renewed energy. We would have the BBQ at the end of the tree planting session in the car park. Great idea!

So we headed back with the Scouts while Rob and Ken packed up the ute and BBQ. Ken and Dorothy hitched a ride and stayed in the carpark with the trailer while Rob went into Bunnings. We finished the last patch of planting quite quickly, counted heads and tools, and then started back to the carpark. Along the walk back, some of us took the high road and some of us took the low road. Jane and I had gumboots on, so we coped with the river crossings quite well, but the Scouts were in sneakers and had to find an alternate river crossing. Which they did while we watched on. I'm sure they enjoyed the challenge of not getting their feet wet!

Once back at the carpark we stood around waiting for Rob to come back. Eventually, (or maybe unfortunately!) I belatedly noticed that one of our members was missing. Had anybody seen John? Nope! Dorothy had been the last one to see him. He had been walking out from the weir but we hadn't seen him pass us while we were tree planting. It was eventually decided that a search party had better go looking for him. Ken drove his vehicle down the track as far as he could and then he walked with Danny back to the weir. Mike and Denis followed along, looking in all the nooks and crannies and alternative tracks.

When Rob finally got back, hungry and annoyed that the day was being dragged out, we then had to tell him that John was missing. It didn't improve his mood! After leaving the valve with us to attach to the BBQ, he also set off in the 4WD to find John. We had started enjoying the BBQ when someone noticed John walking along the road back to the carpark. He had walked all the way out to Junction Road carpark and then walked all the way back to the Braniff's Road carpark – but hadn't told anyone his intentions! Thankful that he was OK, but annoyed at the time lost, Wendy and I set off to find the men. We got lucky and found Rob heading back along the track from Junction Road. We flagged him down to tell him the news. He dropped Ken off (who then drove Wendy and I back to the carpark) and then went with Danny to find Mike and Denis, who had walked to the end of the Side Creek track and back in their search for John. Eventually, everyone arrived back at the carpark where they then enjoyed the BBQ chops that had been saved for them. (Mind you we had a bit of trouble convincing the Scouts that they couldn't eat it all!) By this time Rob was starving and certainly appreciated his belated lunch. So... after all our little dramas, the day eventually finished on a happy note. We planted 605 trees all up, cleaning out our nursery stock for the year. The Scouts thanked us for our time and we all thanked them for their great efforts. All in all I think that a good day was had by (nearly) all.

Subscriptions

It is that time of the year again, so here is the cut-off slip for payment of you're outstanding membership fees. Please ignore it if you are already paid up, but please, please, please don't forget, as you will be deleted from our list if we don't hear from you.

To: Treasurer, Friends of Morwell National Park, PO Box 19, Churchill, 3842

Please find enclosed the amount of \$_____ (\$10 per person, \$15 per family/group) being for membership 2002/2003.

Name:.....Telephone:.....
Address:.....

Following are the transcripts of the various reports from the AGM held on August 4.

Friends of Morwell National Park *Annual General Meeting- 4/08/02*

Annual General Meeting declared open 2:05pm.

Attendance: Ed Steenbergen, Wendy Steenbergen, Rob Howell, Jane Sultana, Denis Sultana, Cathy Beamish, Michael Beamish, Dorothy Reinkowsky, John Pulis, Ken Harris, Tom Lawless.

Apologies: nil

Minutes of previous AGM were read and accepted as a true account. (John Pulis, Michael Beamish)
The President's Report (copy included) was read and accepted. (Denis Sultana, John Pulis).
The Ranger's Report (copy included) was read and accepted. (Jane Sultana, Dorothy Reinkowsky)
The Treasurer's Report was read and accepted. (Cathy Beamish, Denis Sultana)

Election of office Bearers:

President- Ken Harris. (Nom- John Pulis, Sec- Denis Sultana)
Vice President- Ed Steenbergen (Nom- John Pulis, Sec- Jane Sultana)
Secretary- Jane Sultana (Nom- Cathy Beamish, Sec- John Pulis)
Treasurer- Wendy Steenbergen (Nom- John Pulis, Sec- Dorothy Reinkowsky)
Newsletter- Michael Beamish (Nom- Jane sultana, Sec- Wendy Steenbergen)
Publicity- In his absence a tentative nomination was put forward for Danny Barclay to fill this position:
(Nom- John Pulis, Sec- Wendy Steenbergen)

General Business:

Motion that the membership fee structure will remain unchanged at \$10 per person or \$15 per family or group. Passed unanimously. (Wendy Steenbergen, Denis Sultana)

Motion that recommended payment of the Incorporation Fee forthwith. Passed unanimously. (Wendy Steenbergen, John Pulis)

Annual General Meeting closed 2:35pm

Friends of Morwell National Park *Committee Meeting- 4/08/02*

Committee Meeting declared open 2:40pm.

Attendance: Ed Steenbergen, Wendy Steenbergen, Rob Howell, Jane Sultana, Denis Sultana, Cathy Beamish, Michael Beamish, Dorothy Reinkowsky, John Pulis, Ken Harris, Tom Lawless.

Apologies: nil

Minutes of the previous Committee Meeting on 2nd May 2002 were read and accepted as a true account. (Moved: Denis Sultana, Seconded: Jane Sultana)

Business arising from previous meetings minutes: nil

Correspondence:

Inwards:

Letter from Mark Waller: He is interested in joining the Friend's Group and was asking for information on the group's activities.

Primary Skills Victoria: They were advertising training courses in Conservation and Land Management.

Parks Victoria: Exchange trips for Friends and Volunteers.

Parks Victoria: Letter to Ken Harris thanking him for his response to the questionnaire regarding the inclusion of Friend's Group field data in the Parks Victoria Information System (EIS)

Minister for Environment and Conservation: Parks Victoria 2002/2003 Community Grant application was successful. PROJECT TITLE: Improve Visitor Facilities Kerry Road Picnic Area. AMOUNT: \$5,970.00

National Heritage Trust: Australian Govt Envirofund application 'Revegetation of Pine Plantation'. Our application has been received.

Outwards:

Letter to Mark Waller sending him information about the Friend's group and it's upcoming activities.

Reply on behalf of the Friend's group to Latrobe City Council re: 'Ecologically Sustainable Development' draft paper.

Reply to Parks Victoria: Response to the questionnaire regarding the inclusion of Friend's Group field data in the Parks Victoria Information System (EIS)

Treasurers Report:

As attached.

Moved: Wendy Steenbergen, Seconded: Jane Sultana.

Rangers Report:

None

General Business:

If we are to do seeding we need to find some way of getting seed in greater quantity. Perhaps a contractor could be hired to collect seed for us.

We could try some direct planting along Side Creek and perhaps in some of the more easily accessible areas of Bluegum Hill.

The Churchill scouts will be joining us for our August activity (tree planting on Potato Flat). They found out about this activity through the Friend's Group web site. Current access to the website seems good. More people are visiting it now.

Calender of Activities for 2002 was discussed and is being produced by Michael Beamish. It will be published in the December 2002 newsletter.

Meeting Closed 4:10pm

**Friends of Morwell National Park
President's Report 2001-2002**

Having been re-elected your President last year, after a break of 5 years, it falls to me to report on another full year of development of Morwell National Park.

Among important achievements at which we have all worked very hard, have been the thorough elimination (for the moment) of all willows from along the accessible section of Billys Creek. There will be a lot of follow up work needed in the years to come, but the willows are now pretty well gone and the replacement plantings are beginning to fill the gaps.

Tree planting has been an ongoing task for many years. We have been planting since 1989, with the big task of revegetating the Billys Creek flats being started in the pouring rain on 6th May 1991. Well we have finally finished that enormous task. We have planted between 1500 and 2000 trees each year over that period which adds up to over 20,000 trees, together with major contributions from other groups, especially the Trust for Conservation Volunteers who planted a large number of trees in the early 1990's.

Revegetation isn't over though and we have already made a small start to the next major task, the revegetation of Blue Gum Hill all over its very steep hillsides. We are running trials to determine how best to achieve this and our current efforts are being devoted to clayballs as a means of growing trees and shrubs from seed.

Last November saw us all making mud pies all afternoon, or rather rolling 3600 little balls of clay and seeds. In April, we spread the first of these over a 10m by 10m, fenced area and we are eagerly awaiting the evidence this spring of whether we have started some trees growing on the hillside!

While on the hill, Rob inspected our earlier seeding trial which was pretty successful and still has some 86 wattles and gum trees surviving and growing well, out of the 123 that were first established.

Seed collection is now targeted at the species we want to grow on Blue Gum Hill, particularly blue gum and varnish wattle and a lot of effort was put into collecting the seed. It was a bad year for silver wattle and blackwood seed in the park, but we have good reserves of both species.

Other improvements in the Park during the year include:

- Improvements to the Fosters Gully Track resulting from repairs to the area damaged by the fire the previous year.
- Completion of the installation of benches at strategic points along all the tracks and installation of signposts at key points to show the various tracks in the Billys Creek area.
- Provision of a Billys Creek track leaflet available in boxes at the entrances to the Park.
- Distribution of the Park Brochures developed by the Friends and in particular the result of great work by Ed Steenbergen.

The annual koala count was again well attended and we were again assisted by the Central Gippsland Older Adults Recreational Network. 10 koalas were found and a lot of orchids were also seen including one of the least common species in the park, the short-lipped leek orchid, *Prasophyllum brevilabre*.

Parks Victoria again rewarded us for our labours by providing a spit roast in December, which was well received by the Friends and visitors from Friends of Baw Baw, Tarra Bulga and Mt. Worth.

The Park has had many visitors over the year. I guided groups from the Traralgon Historical society and from the Region's Cub Scouts around the Park and Mike did the same with a group from the Australian Plant Society.

On March 23rd I represented the Friends at the Friends Network seminar. This was on the subject of native grasslands and was held at the Organ Pipes National Park. The March weekend next year will see the next biennial Friends Network Conference.

We have continued success in obtaining grants for our ongoing work in the Park. This year we have obtained a grant to install a gas barbecue and improved notice board shelter in the Kerry Road picnic area.

We have also obtained funding and assistance for the removal of the pines alongside Jumbuck Road and to replace them with the appropriate native species. It will be nice to be able to remove pines and willows from the plant list for the Park!

The implementation of the Regional Forest Agreement and the termination of the lease on the block behind Blue Gum Hill are still in the process of consultation, but it seems clear that this land will become part of the Park before long and we shall then be able to proceed with developing the Coprosma track.

I continue to maintain the Morwell National Park website and have recently added the Park Newsletter to the site, with an archive of old newsletters back to 1996. It is also now possible to obtain distribution maps for all the plant and animal species I have recorded in the Park.

Finally I must say a round of thank yous. First thank you is to Ed Steenbergen for his great work as president for the last few years. Then I must thank all my fellow committee members for their help in keeping the Friends at work, especially Jane as secretary, Wendy as treasurer and Mike for his great work at producing the newsletter each month. My final thank you is to our ranger Rob Howell, who as always has worked so well to maintain and improve the Park and has worked with and supported the Friends in all our activities.

Ken Harris
President 29th July 2002

Ranger's Report - Morwell NP 2001/2002

Another eventful year has passed in the Park and an important milestone has at last been reached: The completion of tree planting on the flats along Billy Creek. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this monumental task over the last 12 years. It gives one a great sense of satisfaction to look out over that valley now and see thousands of native trees on what were once bare paddocks with a creek hidden by Willows.

Large amounts of blackberry spraying were again done by contractors in the Billy Creek area, using Good Neighbour funding. The big patches along Clematis Track were treated and follow up work was done on areas along Lodge Track, Side Creek, Zig Zag Track and above Billys Creek.

The Grant application for 2002/2003 has been successful so we should have our new gas BBQ installed by late spring / early summer and a new notice board for Friends' stuff in the info shelter sometime after that. The 2001/2002 Grant of \$3100 to construct a fence around the Blue Gum Hill revegetation area turned out to be less than half what was needed to do the job (the best quote obtained was \$7550), so the money was spent on tree planting materials and more fencing materials. We now have enough wire, posts etc to build 1 km of fence around the reveg site.

All the seats, signs and leaflet boxes for Billys Creek walking tracks have been put in place and walking track notes are now available at Junction Road and Braniffs Road. Also, a new picnic table was installed in Lyndon's Clearing with the funding which came to the Friends group through Ellen's will.

Our experiment with making clay seed balls by hand has shown this technique to be very labour intensive and, if the field trials show a good germination and survival rate, it may be worthwhile building a machine to make them.

Once again, thanks to all Friends for making the last twelve months a very fruitful and productive year for Morwell National Park. Give yourselves a big pat on the back. In future we should try to fit more fun-type activities into the calendar.

Rob Howell
Ranger