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# **Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.**

## *Newsletter – January 2005*

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

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Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter and a happy new year to you all. I hope everyone had a good silly season and you are all refreshed and ready to get stuck in to all our planned activities over the next twelve months, even though a large percentage of them involve attaining a tutsan-free Billy Creek due to our grant commitments.

### **What's Happening?**

Many thanks to Denis Sultana for adapting our newsletter banner and letterhead, converting them to jpeg format, thereby making them much smaller (more than 90%!!) for storage purposes and much quicker to send to you via email.

In the mailbox last month, we had:

- FriendsNet newsletter No. 49 for November 2004.
- Under Control (Pest Plant and Animal Management News) No. 28 for October 2004.
- Latrobe City Community Group News, Issue 12 for November 2004.
- Parks Victoria Annual Report and Summary 2003/04.

I will endeavour to read through these for anything relevant to our group, the size of the pile of reading material next to my bed permitting, and will keep them until the February activity. If you wish to see them, let me know before then.

### **January Activity**

We are pencilled in for a seed collection session on Sunday, January 16, meeting at the Braniff's Road gate at 10am. This session will depend a great deal on whether there is any seed available to collect! We wish to focus on Varnish Wattle and also Blue Gum if we can access it without too much effort. If it becomes obvious that no seed is available, or if we collect enough for our future requirements, we may be tempted to jump in the creek to remove more tutsan, particularly if the weather is warm. Be prepared with your lunch, refreshments and suitable footwear and clothing for either walking around collecting seed or walking the creek.

## Weeds and Barbecues December Activity Report

It couldn't decide if it was going to rain or shine as we pulled up to the Braniff's Road gate, to find Rob and Reg waiting for us, checking out Reg's Christmas present to himself, an AM/UHF CB radio. Misty, grey cloud lingered around the hilltops as Wendy arrived soon after, with apologies from Denis, Jane, Hilmar and Ken, tied down with various work, family and holiday commitments. Dorothy had let Wendy know that she would meet us at the weir for our BBQ lunch and Kathleen Long, a member of the group back in the very early days of the late 1980's and who now lives in England, was visiting family in the area and was keen to attend. Nobody else put in an appearance, so we loaded up and made our way in to the weir, where we offloaded some gear, then continued to where we had finished up last month.

Still the drizzle persisted, so much so that Cathy donned her full wet weather outfit before hitting the creek. Within minutes the cloud lifted, the sun came out, the temperature soared and Cathy sweltered in all her clobber. Murphy's Law in full operation! The wind was still roaring in the treetops up on the ridges, but down in the creek, 'twas quite pleasant. Some sections of the creek were very scenic, with ferns and flax lily providing a green base to a middle storey of scattered Musk Daisy-bush, Muttonwood and Austral Mulberry and an over-storey of assorted wattles and eucalypts. We even noticed a couple of very healthy and tall Onion Orchids (*Microtis sp.*) growing amongst the grasses on the bank. Other sections were a depressing mix of blackberry, fireweed, nettles and other assorted weedy species, albeit some native. Tutsan, our target for the morning, was not particularly plentiful, but we found enough to keep us annoyed and busy with extraction.

Nearing lunchtime, Kathleen found us in a more open section of creek, and her arrival inspired us to call it a day and make our way back to the weir to prepare for our BBQ. While the rest of us set up and began cooking, Reg and Wendy drove out to the gate to check for latecomers. Nobody was there waiting and there was no sign of Dorothy walking in, so they returned empty handed to find us appropriately settled in and the food almost cooked. What a spread! Rob had provided a terrific selection of chicken fillets, steak, hamburgers and snags, and cooked them all to perfection, while the rest of us had done our bit with various salads, olives, cheese and eggs, and mushrooms, avocado, onion and garlic to roast on the barbie. We ate until we could eat no more, then crammed a bit more in. Still, there was plenty left over, with which we tried to tempt some walkers passing by, too shy, no takers.

As we were taking it easy, ruminating over our excesses and taking in our most pleasant surroundings, our attention was invariably drawn to the sound of the water tumbling over the weir. Unexpected movement caught my eye, as small fish, probably trout, launched out of the pool at the base of the weir, only to be knocked back by the torrent. When I called attention to this spectacle, the others focussed in on something I hadn't noticed, a large crayfish making it's way down the concrete face of the weir! It soon lost balance and tumbled in, but it is amazing the things you see when you take the time to look. Thank you to all who participated and made the afternoon enjoyable, and thank you to all who joined in with our activities during the year, your input is invaluable.