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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – February 2005

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

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Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. I'm afraid there is not much to report this month, as Cathy and I were not able to attend the last activity and I haven't caught up with our mail receipts or any news coming out of the Parks Victoria offices. This trend looks likely to continue this month as well, with my new job dragging me all over the state. It looks like I'll be in Bendigo for three weeks over mid-February, but Cathy should be available to attend in my place. I need a holiday already.

February Activity

On Sunday, February 20, we are scheduled to continue our war on weeds, in particular, Tutsan. We shall start off where we finished last time, just above the Billy Creek weir, so we will meet at the Braniff's Road gate at 10am for the 4WD shuffle to the weir. Hopefully the weather will be warm enough to make getting in the creek a pleasure rather than a shock, but not so hot that we expire from the effort. As always, clothing and footwear to suit the conditions on the day and for warding off the pricklies and bites, plus your refreshments and lunch, should be brought along.

Seed collecting in Billys Creek area on January 16th 2005

January Activity Report

From Ken Harris

A very small group gathered for the first activity of 2005. Just four of us, myself, Wendy, Reg and Rob were the entire team of seed collectors.

We had two target species for the day:

Varnish Wattle	<i>Acacia verniciflua</i>
Blue Gum	<i>Eucalyptus globulus</i>

And we started with the varnish wattle.

Rob drove us to near the top of the Lodge Track and we worked our way slowly down, collecting as much seed as we could as we descended. We would have done a lot better if we had been two weeks earlier as most of the pods were open and many had shed their seed. Only a small proportion of the wattles were carrying seed, but we managed to collect a reasonable amount before we reached the old Lodge site.

We collected some Hazel Pomaderris (*Pomaderris aspera*) seed from the Lodge site, before heading to the Weir for lunch.

After lunch our target was Blue Gum seed from the top of Blue Gum Hill. I chose to walk up the Blue Gum Hill track (the steep way), while Rob drove the others round via Reidy's Road. Despite stopping to rest and collect more Varnish Wattle seed on the way up, I got to the Blue Gums before them. We did not find very much accessible Blue Gum seed on the usual trees, although the amount of flower and unripe seed pods augured very well for next year.

I told Rob that on my ascent, I had noted rather more accessible seed on the Blue Gum with a fence round it beside the trial seed plots, so we drove over the hill top and using the ladder to cross the fence we collected a lot more seed, making the total fairly acceptable for the day.

Wendy and I decided to walk back down the Blue Gum Hill track zigzags, to check up on the seed balls that we scattered on the hill last year. We found the stakes marking the site, but were unable to detect any sign of any of the seed we placed there having germinated. We did find another Blue Gum with plenty of accessible seed and collected all we could reach, so that the totals collected were very satisfactory by the end.

Wendy and I just reached the bottom a few seconds before the truck appeared to meet us and Rob declared it a very successful exercise, despite the small team of workers!

Another Version

From Wendy Steenbergen

We had a small band of Friends arrive at Braniff's Rd for our seed collecting activity, we (Ken, Reg & Wendy) all piled into Rob's truck, and drove around and down the fire track towards Junction Rd looking for a particular species but to Rob's horror all we found was some more plastic tree guards, which I had great delight in removing. We then headed up the Lodge Track and proceeded to fill our bags with Varnish Wattle seeds. By this time it was lunchtime, so next stop was at the weir for much needed nourishment.

We now needed to find Blue Gum seeds and, as the best trees were at the top of Blue Gum Hill, Rob suggested we drive the long way around via Reidy's Rd. Ken had a better idea and decided to walk, so we left him to it and met him at the top. Plenty of seed was found so we continued up the hill and had a look at the old trial plots and much new growth was found under the main Blue Gum tree still fenced in.

Ken & I decided to have a look at the area where we had scattered the clay balls a few months ago, so following the contours of the hill we eventually found the track and the sites but no sign of any growth. We continued down the track to be met at the bottom at Side Creek by Rob in the truck, much to our delight. We then had a ride back to our cars, but on the way the ever watching Ken found a Willow plant near the first creek crossing, so Rob stopped to mark it for removal later that day.

Just to catch up with activities of our members, Dorothy and her son have just returned from a trip to Western Australia to visit her family. She said the drive was tiring but well worth the effort. More fun next month in the park.