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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – April 2006

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

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G'day everyone and welcome to the April edition. Nice drop of rain in the last couple of days, roughly 3 inches in my gauge, although the black top off one gauge disappeared on Thursday, making that unit practically useless. I can only presume that somebody else thought they needed it more than I did! On with the newsletter.....

News and Views

Handed to me last activity, hot from the mailbox, we have:

- An invitation from Environment Victoria for our group to sign up as a member so that we can access their resources, tools and information to strengthen our group. Sounds like an offer too good to refuse, but perhaps not pertinent to our group.
- An invitation to attend a Gippsland Water workshop entitled "The future of water supply and demand in the Gippsland region". Again, not quite within the scope of our group, unless they have plans to refurbish the Billy Creek weir? Water seems to be a hot topic lately, with several other organisations also running meetings on the subject (eg.- EPA/Latrobe City on Morwell River NEIP, WGCMA on their catchment management plans).
- News Update Edition 3 from the Gippsland Sustainable Tourism Project.
- FriendsNet Newsletter No. 54 for February 2006. Some interesting articles, including a mention of the 25 years of service given by various Friends Groups, such as local groups Friends of Baw Baw and Mt St Gwinear Ski Patrol.
- Canopy (Parks Victoria) Newsletter Issue 28. A couple of interesting articles, in particular on the Great Otway NP and the resurrection of vegetation in the Mallee parks since rabbit numbers and grazing pressure has eased.

Cathy and I attended the Owl Night hosted at the Kerry Road BBQ by Parks Victoria and DSE on March 7. Well attended by a variety of participants, such as locals, Friends of Morwell NP, APS Latrobe Valley and Field Naturalists Club, we were treated to a tasty BBQ, followed by an informative talk on owls and the current projects being undertaken towards their research and conservation. A spotlight walk along Foster's Gully didn't reveal any owls, but a couple of wallabies, a ringtail possum and a large glider were sighted by the more patient (slower) walkers. The only sign of an owl was a call from a mopoke (Southern Boobook) off in the distance towards Stringybark Ridge. Following the walk, the loudspeakers were set up to transmit a series of calls from a number of owl species, in the hope of attracting some specimens for us to look at, without any success whatsoever. Still, it was an interesting evening, despite the hordes of mosquitos that took a fancy to us!

Cathy and I also attended the community information meeting for the development of a Morwell River Neighbourhood Environment Improvement Plan (NEIP), held at the Boolarra Hotel on March 29. Wearing two hats, as Friends of Morwell NP and as local residents in the Morwell River catchment, we participated in a workshop to identify issues of concern along the river, but weren't required to volunteer to sit on a steering committee, as there were plenty of others keen to do so. From our point of view, it must be incredibly difficult to gain progress from lots of individuals, all pushing their pet obsessions, some of which have no basis in improvement of the environment.

Hopefully, the Churchill Festival held on April 1 went off without a hitch, was well attended by the public and we had plenty of volunteers from the Friends and APS LV on hand to fly our flags. As Cathy and I were unable to help out on the day due to other community service commitments on the other side of the state, and I have not yet received a report on proceedings, a full report on the day will have to wait until next month.

April Activity

Our calendar says tree guards, but ignore that. We didn't finish walking the creek last month, so Rob wants us to continue pulling Tutsan while the water is still reasonably warm (I don't think he was expecting the recent cold snap). We will meet at the Junction Road gate at 10am on Sunday, April 16. As always, clothing and footwear should be appropriate to the weather and proposed activity, and don't forget your own lunch and refreshments.

Weed Wars, Episode X

Rob, Ken, Wendy, Beryl, Denis, Jane, Aaron, Cathy and I all arrived in plenty of time for the usual gasbag prior to actually doing any work. The main item up for discussion was the impending arrival of Sultana Offspring Number Two, as Jane is 8 months down the track and due in early April, although she looks as if she has several more months to run. Tragic how some can stay looking slim without even trying! We hope all goes well in the next few weeks. Other topics up for discussion were the progress on tree planting (Blue Gum Hill has been surveyed for the cutting of access routes by bulldozer, to enable the tree planting contractors to get their gear in) and tree removal (no progress on the removal of pines from Jumbuk Road). A flight of swifts (White-throated Needletail) overhead distracted us from proceedings for a while.

On to the weeding: Rob, Wendy and Ken worked upstream from their finishing point last month; Beryl, Cathy and I worked downstream from our finishing point last month, all hoping to meet in the middle about lunch time. Denis, Jane and Aaron went for a wander until their appointed departure time. Cathy had to leave on domestic chauffeuring duties, I had a badly timed call of nature probably due to some out-of-date yoghurt. Cathy reappeared with Nicole and Robert just in time for lunch. No sign of the other group. The five of us continued after lunch, finding far too many baby tutsans. We eventually met up with the other group about 3.30pm, who had much the same result as ourselves. Called it a day.

