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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – August 2007

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

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G'day everyone, welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. This edition is dedicated to three main items: our AGM, which is due on the first Sunday in August; the Friends Network Biennial Conference on the second weekend in September; and the reports from our last activity, which highlights the effects of the recent weather events on Morwell NP. Before getting on to all that, here are a couple of items which appeared in the mailbox recently:

- An invitation to provide nominations for the Regional Achievement & Community Awards, closing July 20.
- An invitation to provide nominations for the Landcare Awards, closing July 1.
- A letter from DSE in explanation of their accounts payable processes. Why we received this, I have no idea.
- FriendsNet Newsletter No. 59 for May 2007, including the Biennial Conference details and registration form.

Friends of Morwell NP Annual General Meeting

Our AGM is hereby declared to take place at the home of Jane and Denis Sultana, 37 Tulloch Way, Traralgon, on Sunday, August 5 at 1.30pm. Thank you to Jane and Denis for offering to host the meeting, allowing them both to attend while minding their children! A draft agenda is included below. Please bring along all your ideas for the next 12 months, as well as a plate of goodies to share for afternoon tea. For those who don't know, Tulloch Way is in the eastern end of Traralgon, near the Glenview Park Racecourse. Turn south off the Prince's Highway onto McNairn Road, cross the railway line and take the first right turn into Tulloch Way, opposite the southern boundary of the racecourse grounds.

Agenda (Draft)

- 1. Attendance**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Previous AGM Minutes**
- 4. Business Arising from Previous AGM**
- 5. President's Report**
- 6. Ranger's Report**
- 7. Treasurer's Report**
- 8. Election of Office Bearers**
- 9. General Business**
 - New Members
 - Membership Fees
 - Incorporation Fees and Forms
 - Consolidation of Bank Accounts

Of course, AGM time means subscription renewal time, too, so here is the renewal form if you care to use it:

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 2005/2006.

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

Address:.....

August Activity

The calendar states that we will participate in Conference Planning with Friends of Baw Baw NP, but this planning will be taking place initially at a meeting at the DSE Offices in Traralgon on the evening of Tuesday, August 7. To compound matters, Rob will be on leave during August and won't be attending any meetings or activities. He has, though, sorted out a few jobs and a stand-in Ranger for us, so we can continue with some track clearing work along the upper reaches of Billy Creek. We will meet at the Junction Road gate at 10am on 19/8/07, all prepared for another day of throwing branches off tracks!

After the Storm July Activity Report

Where do I start with this one? Probably the beginning is a good place, even though that will be back in the July newsletter, where I spent a paragraph or two raving about the weather. Very happy with Boolarra's June rainfall of 161mm, I commented that I expected a similar amount to have fallen in the Park. As it turned out, I was a bit short in my estimate: Rob tells me that about 260mm ended up in the Park gauge, most of it in the last week of June. Consequently, Billy Creek did break its banks in the Park, scouring its course clean and leaving a fair amount of silt and gravel lying over the flats. An email from Ken on July 12, copied below, first alerted me to the event:

Mike, I went for a walk to and past the Weir today and found a scene of utter devastation. It is clear that the creek rose very high indeed. There is silt deposited all over the place, as much as 30 metres from the creek in places. But the real devastation is the number of large trees that have fallen. They have almost all been uprooted and are mostly trees close to the creek. I suspect that it all happened while the creek was at its highest and the trees had their roots inundated with water. A strong wind must have come through the area while the trees were at their most vulnerable and many of the largest are now lying on the ground. Most spectacular is the area around the weir itself. An enormous Manna Gum has fallen between the weir and the picnic table. The photograph of Friends past and present, taken at the 21st birthday celebration and included in the June newsletter, looks very different today, see the attached picture (the weir is just behind all those logs). I walked on as far as the first section of the Coprosma track, getting as far as the first ford (I wasn't game to cross the ford). There are several trees blocking our nice new track and I could see more obstacles on the next section beyond the creek. A lot more work needed, although most of it is chainsaw work. I rang Rob and he was already aware of the situation. In fact he was on his way in there to start the clean-up, but it is going to be very hard. They won't get a vehicle in as far as the weir until they remove a large tree that has fallen from the top of the cliff and it will be very dangerous to remove. If it were possible to cut it through, the base of the tree and the stump would almost certainly slide over the top of the cliff and crash onto the track. Heavy machinery is going to be needed! Ken

Here is Ken's photo, along with the photo from the June newsletter for comparison: the broken part of the log behind the table is sitting on the buttress of the weir, at left in the second photo. The 'Billys Creek Weir' sign is just visible (and still in one piece!) amongst the leaves in front of the log on the right side of the photo.



So, when Cathy and I fronted at the Junction Road gate on July 15, ripping tree guards off the Lodge Track hill was once again not on the agenda. Instead, Rob, Ken, Wendy, Darren, Les and ourselves would be working our way up along the Billy Creek Track towards the weir, doing what we could to clean up the track. Apart from a few small branches the trip was uneventful until we reached the information board at the first ford, although it was pretty awesome to see all the new

silt and gravel jetties spread out along the banks of the creek. The ford was blocked by some larger branches which were soon cleared away, but most of us walked from here, as the silt deposited about 12 inches deep on the far side of the ford made for some interesting driving from Rob, as he attempted to get the 4WD across. A similar problem awaited at the Potato Flat ford.

The first of the big trees across the track came into view as we passed the base of the Zig Zag Track, hanging over the top



of the road cutting just upstream from there. Only Rob was permitted to operate the chainsaw, so he did most of the hard work while the rest of us carted away the offcuts. Wendy and I cleared the track of some large rocks and soil that had fallen with one of the trees, while the others continued towards the weir clearing the smaller trees and branches.

The area around the weir itself was much altered from our last visit to the site. Adding to the storm damage from a couple of years ago, several more large trees had fallen, particularly upstream of the previous damage. Silt and piles of flood debris were strewn all over the clearing, right over to the base of the hill. Most of the trees were too big for us to tackle, so after clearing what we could, we

continued walking and working upstream. We never made it to the base of Blue Gum Hill, with at least half a dozen large trees across the track to keep us busy. Rob eventually ran out of steam about an hour after we should have stopped for lunch, so we called it a day. Cathy and Wendy took the opportunity to walk up the Coprosma Track to inspect the damage, reporting several more trees down and the fords washed out, the first shown at right. They couldn't negotiate the second ford, to check out our track maintenance efforts from March and April.



Ken had left his lunch at home, so instead of making him watch us eat, we took pity and drove back to Junction Road. While Ken headed off to find a feed, we parked ourselves on the picnic table at the gate and knocked back some hot soup and sandwiches, while discussing the events of the day and plans for the future.

The Friends Conference

The Victorian Environment Friends Network 12th Biennial Conference will be held on the weekend of September 7-9 (Friday evening to Sunday afternoon), based at the Rawson Village Resort and Convention Centre. The Friends of Morwell NP are one of the local groups helping to host the conference and provide logistical support to presentations and tours, although the exact nature of our input is yet to be identified. A planning meeting to discuss these issues will be attended by Ken, Cathy and I at the DSE/Parks Victoria offices in Traralgon on Tuesday, August 7, at 7.30pm.

Regardless of the role we will play as a host group, we would still like to encourage all of our members to participate in the planned activities. An information sheet containing a conference program outline is available online at:

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/%7Efriends/files/ConferenceProgram%20Sep07.pdf>

and a registration form **due by Friday, August 3** can be found at:

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/%7Efriends/files/ConferenceRegistration%20Sep07.pdf>

Note that these forms are aimed at non-local registrants who will be utilising the transport, accommodation and catering options presented. For locals who will provide their own transport and accommodation, only the conference fee of \$25 per person needs to be forwarded. At the time of writing, after discussion with the information contact Maelor Himbury, meals for registrants not staying at the resort had not been considered, but should be available at relative prices and would need to be individually booked and paid for on the weekend. Hopefully, this can be confirmed at the planning meeting.

For those members who do not have internet access, I have included an edited version of the information and registration forms overleaf. I hope to see you all there!

**Victorian Environment Friends Network
12th Biennial Conference
7–9 September 2007 (Fri. evening to Sun. pm)**

‘A Climate of Change’

Supported by Parks Victoria

Of one thing we can be certain — the next few decades will see considerable change. Australia faces the challenge of unstable weather conditions, threats to biodiversity, changing demographics and advances in technology and communications with possible social unrest. In this new world, how will Environment Friends Groups respond?

- Keynote Speakers:**
- Professor Nancy Millis – celebrated microbiologist, Chancellor at La Trobe University 1992–2006, and former chair of the Parks Victoria Board. Professor Millis will give an overview.
 - Dr. Barrie Pittock, from CSIRO Atmospheric Research, is one of the world’s leading experts on climate change.
 - Karen Alexander is *Victoria Naturally* Biodiversity Campaigner.

- Program outline:**
- Friday Evening: Welcome and Orientation**
From 7.30 pm: There will be presentations from the local Ranger and Friends of Baw Baw NP, Friends of Morwell NP, Mt St Gwinear Ski Patrol and Friends of Tyers Park.
- Saturday**
Morning: 9.00 am – Guest speakers and constructive workshop discussions on a range of subjects such as Friends’ use of GPS, weed mapping, digital nature photography, publishing newsletters and dealing with VCAT.
Afternoon: Local Groups will lead walks to notable spots in the area and an excursion to fascinating Walhalla.
Evening: Group Presentations - The opportunity for groups to report their achievements and share their experiences and challenges.
- Sunday**
Morning: The 2007 Best Friend Awards will be announced and recipients honoured.
Guest speakers and discussions.
Conference concludes with lunch.

Conference cost and accommodation options:

Option A:- \$125-00 per person

Accommodation, conference fee and meals – Saturday breakfast to Sunday midday lunch. BYO pillowslip and sheets (or sleeping bag) and towel.

Option B:- \$95-00 per person

Camping on-site, together with conference fee and meals – Saturday breakfast to Sunday midday lunch.

Option C:- \$25-00 per person

Conference fee only, no accommodation or meals included.

NOTE:

- Friday night meal is BYO or eat in Village Bistro at own expense.
 - Morning and afternoon tea and supper are included in the conference fee.
 - Special diets or food requirements are catered for (e.g. vegetarian, vegan, gluten free)
- Please indicate your requirements on the Registration Form.

For further information, contact Maelor Himbury, 9374 1902 or maelor@melbpc.org.au

Victorian Environment Friends Network
12th Biennial Conference
7-9 September 2007

'A Climate of Change'

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REGISTRATION FORM

(Please use one form per person)

Name _____ Name for badge _____

Address _____ Postcode _____

Home phone _____ Work phone _____

Mobile _____ E-mail _____

Friends group _____

FEES: Tick EITHER Option A or Option B (both include conference fee, meals and refreshments as specified in brochure), or Option C (conference fee only):

Option A: On-site bunkroom \$125 **Option B:** Camping on-site \$95 **Option C:** Conference fee only \$25

Note: We have booked the Village and the cost is the same whether you are there for one or two nights.

TRANSPORT: If you are not travelling by private transport, please indicate which of the following means you propose to use (see brochure for details):

- I will travel on the Parks Victoria free bus leaving the city at 1.00 pm Friday 7th (& return Sunday).
 I will travel by train to Moe, to be picked up as on brochure.

SPECIAL FOOD REQUIREMENTS: _____

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR METHOD OF PAYMENT:

- By enclosed cheque/money order** payable to 'VNPA Friends Conference'
 By electronic funds transfer: BSB 063-001 Account no. 0090 2229 Account name: VNPA

By credit card: Mastercard Visa

No. □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□

Expiry date: _____ Name on card: _____

Signed: _____

**This form is to be sent to Friends Network Conference,
c/- VNPA, Level 3 / 60 Leicester St, CARLTON 3053, not later than Friday 3 August 2007.**