

PO Box 19
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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – September 2010

President:
5122 3137

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaean.net>
A0016319X

Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. This month we have a bit for you. Included are the report from the last activity, minutes from the Annual General Meeting and Committee Meetings, 2009/10 President's Report and a special treat for those who are paying attention at the end of the newsletter.

The President's Report makes very interesting reading and it makes you reflect that we have done quite a bit over the last year.

The weather has finally turned colder and wetter. The water gauge is now recording healthy amounts like you would expect at this time of the year. The green rolling hills around and in the park is a response to the increased water in the surrounding environment.

For those who could not get the Annual General Meeting or have not paid for this years' membership, the membership form is given below.

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 2010/2011.

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

Address:.....

Friends of Morwell National Park Inc: PO Box 19, Churchill, 3842, <http://morwellnp.pangaean.net>.

President: Ken Harris, 51223137

Vice-President: Peter McDonald

Secretary: Beryl Nelson

Treasurer: Wendy Steenbergen

Publicity: Denis Sultana

Public Officer: Jane Sultana

Newsletter Editor: Darren Hodgson, 90 Tebb Terrace Jeeralang Junction 3840, 51222108, dhodgson@wideband.net.au

Members: Mary Austin, John & Margaret Barker, Mike & Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Reg Felmingham, Tom Lawless, Peter & Wendy McDonald, John Pulis, Joan Sikkema, David Stickney, Laura Webber, Kate Richardson, Australian Plant Society (Latrobe Valley).

August Activity Report

This month the regulars were back including Wendy, Mike, Cathy, Beryl, Darren, John, Margaret and Kate. It was good to see John healthy enough to join the group today and it was good to know that he was well enough to help out. Another person that it was good to welcome back was Jenny. We are still awaiting the appointment of a permanent Ranger for the Park.

Sadly we could not go through with the original plans of moving the concrete fence posts to the Coprosma Track and putting them into Billys' Creek as stepping stones in the creek crossings, so alternative plans were discussed. The decision was made to work upon removing a barbed wire fence uphill from the area where the concrete posts were removed, last month. This task would also allow us to have a go at removing some more of the concrete fence posts.

This was only a little job where we expected we might not have a large impact. How wrong we were. We started at the beginning of the tree line by removing barbed wire and star pickets while Mike put himself in charge of the most difficult job of trying to pull up the fence posts. Although we were a fair bit up the hill the ground was moist and some of the holes filled with water. We had chosen the right conditions in which to try this.

While Mike labored on the concrete posts, Wendy and myself worked up the hill cutting and removing barbed wire. Jenny, Cathy, Kate, Beryl and Margaret each at different times relayed the wire down to an increasing pile at the bottom of the hill. Wendy and I kept working up the hill, while the pile below grew. On our way up John spotted patches of chicken wire and barbed wire scattered in the undergrowth and buried in the ground. Most of this was taken but there is still some more patches to the right of the fence line to be removed.

Lunch was called and the little job was looking increasing large since we did not know how far up the fence line ran. After lunch we successful got a few concrete posts out of the ground and then headed up the hill again. There was a lot more wire to collect and Jenny, Wendy and I were able to collect all of the wire and most of the star pickets from the fence line at the top of the hill. The fence line ran from the beginning of the tree line all the way up to the top of hill at Jumbuk Road. The fence had a length of at least a few hundred metres and it was steeply uphill and downhill that we travelled.

At one stage Wendy went to find how far the fence line ran and she was gone for about half an hour. We thought that perhaps she had made it to Tarra-Bulga. She took this long since it was a fair way up to the top and she had started rolling a large roll of wired barbed wire from a point near to the top. When we saw her again the roll was bigger than she was. The wire collected from the top section was placed in one of the arms of the Zig Zag Track which ran close to this fence line at one point. At least this is a place which will be easily accessible for Parks vehicles. The view from the top was wonderful and the vista is just as wide as the one at the top of Blue Gum Hill, with the Pondage clearly visible and the Baw Baws in the distance.

The day ended with us having collected two massive piles of wire and now it should be a little safer for the animals in this section of the Park. In the future we may need to look into equipment to remove the remaining star pickets.

Friends of Morwell National Park

Annual General Meeting - 25th July 2010

Annual General Meeting declared open at 1.50pm

Attendance: - Beryl Nelson, Wendy Steenbergen, Darren Hodgson, Ken Harris, Peter McDonald, Kate Richardson, Margaret Barker, Cathy & Mike Beamish.

Apologies: - Reg Felmingham, John Barker, Denis & Jane Sultana.

Previous AGM minutes held on 2nd August 2009 were read and accepted as a true account - by general acceptance.

The **President's Report** was read and accepted - Moved by Cathy Beamish, Seconded by Peter McDonald. (It is given below)

The **Ranger's Report** wasn't tabled, Jenny Brown's contract as Ranger had expired.

Treasurer's Report was read and accepted - Moved by Beryl Nelson, Seconded by Mike Beamish. The Treasurer reported that we have 20 financial members, for 2009-2010

Motion was moved by Wendy Steenbergen that Incorporation fees be paid (\$41.80) for this financial year, Seconded by Darren Hodgson.

Election of Office Bearers:-

President - Ken Harris

(Moved Margaret, Seconded Wendy).

Vice President - Peter McDonald

(Moved Cathy, Seconded Wendy).

Secretary - Beryl Nelson

(Moved Margaret, Seconded Ken).

Treasurer - Wendy Steenbergen

(Moved Darren, Seconded Beryl).

Newsletter - Darren Hodgson

(Moved Cathy, Seconded Margaret).

Publicity - Denis Sultana

(Moved Beryl, Seconded Cathy).

Jane Sultana will continue to act as our **Public Officer**.

General Business: -

It was decided that membership fees will remain the same - \$10.00 per person, \$15.00 per family or group (moved by Wendy, seconded by Ken) passed unanimously.

Annual General Meeting declared closed at 2.20pm

Friends of Morwell National Park
President's Report for 2009 to 2010

It is again time to report a busy year of work by the Friends of Morwell National Park. It has been a year of changes, with our ranger Rob Howell leaving us at least temporarily to undertake another task for Parks Victoria and seeing his temporary replacement Jenny Brown accompany us for a six month period, and finally been left without a ranger at the end of the year.

Our AGM saw some changes in the committee and in particular we have a change of Newsletter Editor. Mike Beamish has held this position for a long time and has done a superb job in preparing our newsletters. Darren Hodgson has taken on the task this year and has done an excellent job in his first 12 month in the position.

The first outing of the year was a walk in the park with only a small number present. We walked from the top end of Jumbuck Road, exploring the park round to the Muttonwood Creek track returning via Stringybark Ridge to Fosters Gully. We saw a variety of animals, plants, including early orchids, and a number of fungi and lichens.

September saw us back in the creek removing Tutsan Plants. Rob Howell was with us for the last time, having been seconded to another role in Parks Victoria for 9 months.

35 new nesting boxes have been placed in the re-vegetated area along Billy's Creek by Green Corps. These enhance the 5 boxes placed there some years previously.

In October we conducted our annual Koala count. The count was well attended by people, but less so by Koalas. The count was down on the previous year with only 6 Koalas located.

November was a split working bee. Peter McDonald and I conducted the annual Butterfly Orchid survey, while the rest of the party went back to the war on Tutsan in Billys Creek.

The results of the Butterfly Orchid survey are disturbing. There is a continued decline in the number of plants and I am greatly concerned that global warming will result in our losing our most special plant from the park. The one good result was the sighting of a Powerful Owl in Fosters Gully.

The same day Parks Victoria gave a barbecue for 9 Friends Groups from the area in Traralgon and thanked us for our year's work in the Park.

Early in December we held a dinner in the Yinnar pub to thank Rob Howell for all his work in the park over the last 20 years. The dinner was well attended and Rob was presented with a collage of photos of the park and our activities over the years. He was also presented with a pen turned out of a piece of Silver Wattle from the park.

Great news in December! We have a new (temporary) ranger. Jenny Brown was appointed ranger for the park for 6 months. We were pleased to meet up with Jenny for our December outing and she has worked well with us for the 6 months of her appointment. We are now back in limbo however, with no ranger. There is a possibility of Jenny's appointment being extended and there is also a possibility that Rob will return to the park. We eagerly await further news.

Our first outing with Jenny was check of the new nest boxes along Billy's Creek. We checked just over half the nest boxes and found some had nesting material in them and then to our delight found a Sugar Glider in one of the boxes. We then headed up to Fosters Gully where we celebrated the end of the year with our annual barbecue feast.

Our January outing was in two parts. In the morning we collected Blue Gum seed from trees on the top of Blue Gum Hill, with great success. After lunch we completed our nest-box check and to our delight we found a Ring-tailed Possum in one of the boxes. We have now found Agile Antechinus, Sugar Glider and Ring-tailed Possum,

all using nest-boxes along Billy's Creek.

February saw us back in the creek, removing yet more tutsan. It is becoming discouraging to find there are still so many tutsan plants despite all our efforts over the years.

In March we got busy tidying up the existing section of the Coprosma Track after stopping to watch a Koala cross the creek on our way in. The track becomes overgrown quite quickly and we had a hard day's labour but to good effect and the track is back in good working order.

Some of that track section has suddenly gained in importance with the announcement that a new track, The Grand Strzelecki Track, is to be constructed, connecting Morwell National Park to Tara-Bulga National Park,. It will start at the Junction Road Car Park and use the existing Billy's Creek, Weir and Coprosma Tracks before creating new track further along Billy's Creek and way beyond the park boundary.

Because of its great relevance to Morwell National Park, I have attended meetings of Grand Strzelecki Track Inc. and am now established on the committee as their treasurer. A \$500,000 government grant will be used for the track construction for which planning is almost complete and track construction is expected to start fairly soon.

In April we set up a stall at the Churchill Fair instead of our usual working Bee. The stall attracted a number of visitors, but no new members resulted, although we did sell a couple more books.

Yet another attack on Tutsan was our June task. We were a smaller group and although there, I stayed out of the creek because of my troublesome knee. I studied the mosses and lichens while the other 5 waged valiant war on Tutsan.

May saw us doing track work again. Our plan was mainly a walk in the park, ascending the Clematis Track and returning down the steep Lodge Track. We took a few tools with us and tidied up the track as we went. It was mostly in good condition and we did not have to work very hard. The wildlife was good along the track, including Swamp Wallabies, a Koala, two Peregrine Falcons and the biggest surprise, a small group of deer. There were 3 or 4 of them and there was a lot of speculation as to which deer they were. The eventual decision was that they were Fallow Deer as our latest helper Grant who lives adjacent to the Park had seen them a few times and had seen the spots on their sides that distinguishes that species. Lovely animals though they are, they are not a welcome addition to the park's fauna (just as we seem to have got rid of all the goats and sheep).

In June we had set ourselves a hard task, to get up to 8 concrete posts out of the ground, beside Billy's Creek, with a view to using them as stepping stones in the creek crossings on the Coprosma Track. We were far more successful than we dared to hope, mainly thanks to the assistance of Grant Pengelly. We managed to uproot seven posts and six of them were transported to the end of the Weir Track as close as we could get them to the creek crossings.

I once again want to thank Rob Howell and other Parks staff for their help and support throughout the year. We want to give a special thank you to Rob. He has worked with us for twenty years now, but has, at least for the moment, left to take on other responsibilities. We also want to thank Jenny Brown who has been our acting ranger for six months. It has been a pleasure working with her. We hope to see one of them back in the near future. Finally a big thank you to all of the Friends who have helped us make further progress in developing the park,

Ken Harris

20th July 2010

Friends of Morwell National Park

Committee Meeting held 25th July 2010.

Committee Meeting declared open 2.20pm.

Attendance: - Cathy & Mike Beamish, Beryl Nelson, Darren Hodgson, Kate Richardson, Peter McDonald, Ken Harris, Wendy Steenbergen, Margaret Barker.

Apologies: - Reg Felmingham, John Barker, Denis & Jane Sultana.

Minutes of previous meeting held on 2nd August 2009 were read and accepted as true account. Moved by Peter McDonald, seconded by Wendy Steenbergen.

Business arising from Previous Meeting:-

No issues were raised from the previous minutes.

Inwards Correspondence:-

Newsletter from Friends of Tyers Park dated February 2010.

Under Control No. 40 May 2010.

FriendsNet No 68 August 2009, No 69 November 2010, No 70 February 2010, No 71 May 2010.

DSE letter dated July 2009 requesting feedback on the managed use of fire in parks and forests.

Outwards Correspondence:-

No outwards correspondence was entered into.

General Business:-

1. Wendy reported that she had sold 4 National Park books.
2. The meeting voted unanimously to accept Kate Richardson, Margaret & John Barker into the group.
3. The meeting decided to spend some funds to hire an excavator (\$280.00) plus \$60.00 diesel/food - for our August activity.

Calendar of Activities:-

January - Nest Boxes/Seed Collecting

July - Tree Planting

February - Weed Removal

August - Walk in the Park/AGM

March - Weed Removal

Sept – Spotlight walk or Weed removal

April - Track Maintenance

October - Koala Count

May - 25th Anniversary Celebrations - Sat night
Walk in the Park - Sunday

November - Orchid Survey/Odd Jobs

June - Tree Planting

December - Odd Jobs/Christmas Function

Meeting declared closed 4.00pm.

September Activity

10.00am Sunday 19th September
Junction Road car park

For this month, the activity will have us going for a walk. The plan is to walk the lower reaches of Billy's Creek. The track will be greatly unmade (beyond the end of the Coprosma track), so be ready for some bush-bashing.

The group will meet at the Junction Road entrance and from there we will decide on the route we will be taking.

You will need clothing (including solid walking boots) suitable for the terrain and weather conditions on the day. Bring your lunch along.

