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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – May 2012

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

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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter.

The Grand Strzelecki Track is complete and will be officially opened on the weekend of May 6th and 7th. On the Saturday the focus is on Morwell National Park (Billy's Creek), while on the Sunday the activities are based around the Tarra-Bulga area of the track. The organizing committee would like some of our group to help out on the morning of May 6th. Some people are needed to help with the setting up of marquees, registration and support of walkers who will walk to and from the Billy's Creek section of the Park during that day. Helpers of course can then undertake one of the walks. Helpers will be needed from 7am.

Grand Strzelecki Track Opening

Saturday 6th May

Starting at 8.30am

Walk 1

Walk from Junction Road car park to Jumbuk Road rest area. Return to Junction Road via bus.

Walk 2

Catch a bus from Junction Road to Jumbuk Road rest area then walk from Jumbuk Road rest area to Junction Road car park.

The walk is around 13 kilometers long and will take 4 to 5 hours to complete. Expect to get your feet wet with many creek crossings to be made, although gumboots should be sufficient to keep your feet dry.

Sunday 7th May

Morning

Walk on the Balook - Max Creek loop with bus transport back to Balook.

Middle of the day

Official opening

Afternoon

Walk on the Mount Tassie loop track

Next month we will change the planned activity since the FNCV Fungi Group have invited us (along with the Friends of Mount Worth) to help with a fungus survey. The survey is on the same date and time as the planned activity, so we will delay that activity until next month. For those who don't want to spend a day spotting fungus, some of us will erect new bat boxes instead. So next month there is something for everybody.

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

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Other members: Mary Austin, Wendy Steenbergen, Margaret Barker, Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Reg Felmingham, Wendy McDonald, Joan Sikkema, Kate Richardson, Hilmar Batza, Bronwyn Grass, Australian Plant Society (Latrobe Valley).

The chainsaw course and chemical handling course have both been organized and will occur over the next two months.

Parks Victoria officers continue with their work to rule and as part of the work to rule there is continuing non-support of volunteer groups. These employment negotiations are still affecting the operation of our group and it affects the range of activities we can undertake.

It was suggested at the April activity that we need to apply for a Healthy parks grant for more equipment like a chainsaw, whipper sniper, bush cutter and the safety gear for this machinery. Currently we are requiring Parks rangers to bring this equipment to activities and operate it for us. With us getting qualifications to use the equipment and the rangers not being available, it is now more important to have our own equipment so that we can complete our own maintenance.

April Activity Report – Grand Strzelecki Track Sunday 15th April

At this month's activity we had Wendy, John, Margaret, Ken, Emma, Rod, Darren, Mike, Cathy, Bronwyn, David and a friend for Cambodia in attendance. After receiving the newsletter for a few years it was good to have David along for his first activity.

Matt and Kerry meet us in the car park to return their membership form. Matt and Kerry had cleaned up the car park for us. Matt had hurt his back and could not join us in this activity. Hopefully next month.

We got quickly into the walk since we had a distance to travel. One car drove in while the rest walked in to the end of the Billy Weir Track. We started the walk and noticed that the track had been greatly improved with the track widened. The first half of the track is vehicle width with the second half being a normal walking track.

On the walk we saw a wedge tail eagle, cormorant and herd of cows. Many deer tracks were found in the mud upon the tracks. It was good to see that spraying of some weeds has occurred along the track. Hopefully native vegetation will take its place. The second half of the track will need repeated spraying. There are willows, ragwort and tutsan that need to be sprayed or removed. Over the walk we removed a number of tutsan and collected a bag of berries.

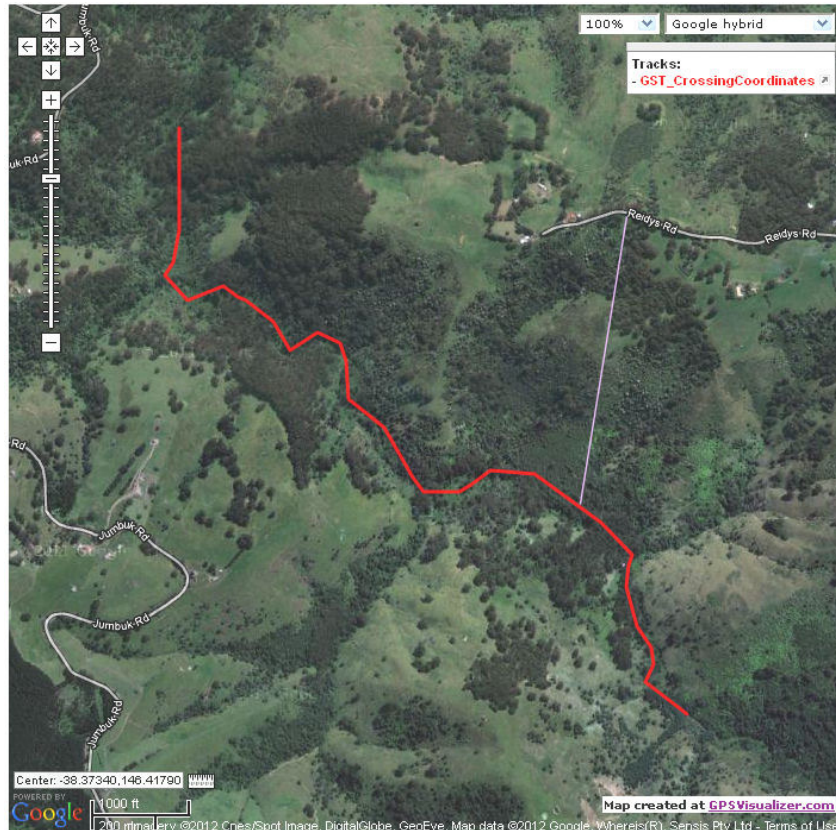
The part of the track we walked included 29 creek crossings. During the walk Ken made a plant inventory of the different plants and insects he located along the track.

Ken has written his observations from the walk and they follow.



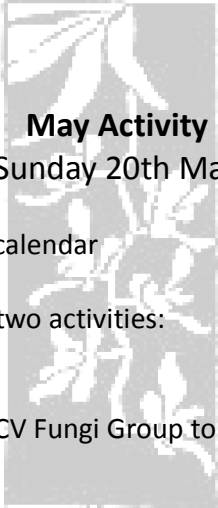
Ken's observations on the Grand Strzelecki Track

I plotted the route we took on our walk. I recorded the co-ordinates of every creek crossing, starting at the third, which was the first on the new track. The first two I still classify as Coprosma Track. I attach a map generated from my coordinates. The first point is where the car was parked, and the second is the third crossing, which chances to be due south (to 6 decimal places), although our actual route was anything but straight. The track is then straight segments between creek crossings. We actually walked well beyond the Park Boundary. I estimate we turned back, 0.8 km beyond the Park boundary. I have placed the Park boundary on the map in purple as accurately as I can. It appears that we actually crossed the boundary on the high section when the track left the creek and climbed up on to a ridge, between creek crossings 22 and 23. We actually crossed the Creek 29 times each way, so 58 times in all.



Sadly all the best plant discoveries were beyond the Park boundary. I have therefore still not found *Pittosporum bicolor* in the Park, although it comes very close! The creeping mistletoe - *Muellerina eucalyptoides* with its attendant caterpillars was also outside the park. The caterpillars are not the caterpillars of the Mistletoe Moth, but could be caterpillars of the Imperial White butterfly, which I have found in the park previously.

The caterpillars on the creeping mistletoe - *Muellerina eucalyptoides*, were definitely caterpillars of the Imperial White butterfly - *Delias Harpalyce*. It is rather interesting. Mike reported there were two caterpillars and that is how I saw it even when I first looked at my pictures. This seemed rather odd for Imperial Whites, which usually feed and later pupate in large clusters. When I looked closely at my second picture, I saw not 2, but 6 caterpillars. It is fairly easy to see that the one on the right is actually two almost parallel caterpillars. The one on the left also show two parallel caterpillars, but when you look closely at the bottom end of this pair it turns out that there are 4 separate ends of caterpillars visible, so they were doing as expected and feeding in a close cluster. I have never before seen them on creeping mistletoe. Those I have seen before were on the more common Drooping Mistletoe - *Amyema pendula*.



May Activity
Sunday 20th May

Note: this is a change from the original calendar

This month you have a choice between two activities:

Activity 1

In this activity we will work with the FNCV Fungi Group to complete a fungi survey at Mount Worth State Park.

Meet at Moonlight Creek Picnic area (Mount Worth) at 10.30am. The activity is expected to finish around 3pm. You will need to bring your lunch and clothing suitable for the weather conditions on the day.

Activity 2

If you are not going to look for fungi you can meet at 10.00am at the Junction Road car park to erect some more nesting boxes. John has completed a number of bat boxes which were originally donated by GippsTAFE. These bat boxes will be erected along with completing some repairs on some of the existing boxes. John will need to collect from Ken the key to the gate, GPS and nesting box map. You will need to bring your lunch and clothing suitable for the weather conditions on the day.