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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – October 2012

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

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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. This month we are happy to announce that the toilet at Kerry Road has been replaced and is open for operations. Parks Victoria have done a great job of replacing the toilet and now toilet facilities are again available to visitors at the Kerry Road section of the Park.

Thank you to Craig for the photos of the new toilet.

This month Ken has written our September activity report.
Thanks Ken.

This month we have two activities you can select between or complete both. Both will be on Sunday 21st October and will be based at the Fosters Gully section of the park. The first activity will be a walk in search of orchids, while in the second we will search for koalas for the annual Koala count. So it could be a day of looking downwards in the morning and upwards in the afternoon. More details for these activities are on the last page.



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

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September Activity Report by Ken Harris

A small group of Friends gathered on 16th September for Track Work and Weeding along Billys creek. Wendy, Peter, Beryl, Reg and Ken were all who turned up, but we were very pleased to have Craig Campbell our ranger back at work with us. We were equipped with three chain saws, but only two operators, Craig and Peter.

We knew of a couple of trees down across the Billys Creek Track following the huge wind storm on the night of the 5th September. We therefore decided to start trying to clear the Billys Creek track of obstructions. We made a good start, removing two known obstacles from the track, but only a few hundred yards further on we found an enormous tree had fallen, completely blocking the track with enormous branches, some suspended high above the track. Craig said there was no way we could do



anything about this obstruction, so we had to rethink our plans. Who knows how many more trees are down further along the track!



Craig knew of about three trees down over the Fosters Gully Track as well, so we redirected our efforts to Fosters Gully. We walked along Fosters Gully as far as Lyndon's Clearing and on the way we dealt with three manageable trees that had fallen over the track. We then returned to the car park for lunch, with Wendy and Beryl taking the long way back and confirming that there were no further blockages on the track.

I knew of two more trees down over the far end of the Stringybark Ridge Track and the adjacent Muttonwood Creek Track, so after lunch we drove round to the Brewsters Road entrance, and parked by the Mutton Wood Creek bridge. We then walked, with Peter and Craig carrying the chain saws, up the steep ascent to Stringybark Ridge. The first tree was easily cleared. The second one, blocking Stringybark Ridge was a large messmate tree with its trunk lying touching the ground, across Stringybark Ridge Track.

It was close to the limit of the size that we could manage, but Craig and Peter set to work. When Craig, closest to the base of the tree was almost through, we were standing by to drive wedges in, but Craig said they were not needed as the location of the cut was beginning to rise. We all stood well clear as Craig continued cautiously and to our surprise the basal section of the tree suddenly sprung sharply up to stand 4 or 5 metres off the ground. Craig had done very well to cut through the tree safely in a dangerous situation. Craig and Peter completed the second cut, leaving a 4 metre log on the track. We hoped to roll it off the track, but it was far too heavy to manoeuvre and they had to make one further cut, before we could roll the two logs out of the way.



We had come so far that we decided to complete the loop via the Muttonwood Creek Track back to the vehicles and on the way removed the tree resting across the boundary fence that had foiled our efforts two months earlier when tidying that boundary track.



During lunch, we met up with a walker from Brewsters Road and he told us of an unseasonal flower on a Butterfly Orchid. The Butterfly Orchid – *Sarcochilus australis*, usually flowers in the park from mid-November to mid-December. A September flower is practically unknown, so I went back with him to see this phenomenon. He had found the flowering plant on a dead *Coprosma quadrifida* branch which had fallen on the ground. He had propped the branch against the shrub and I photographed it there. It had four open flowers, mostly past their best, but

one was still perfect. It was interesting to see that it had several more buds, perhaps 10, which were on a more normal cycle and might not open until November. I speculated that the early flowering was a response to the stress of having fallen to the ground. Perhaps a last shot at reproducing before its inevitable demise.

October Activities
Sunday 21st September

Activity 1 – Orchid Walk

10.00am

The first activity will be a walk of around Fosters Gully to seek out the orchids which can be found at this time of the year. You will need to bring clothing suitable for the weather conditions on the day.

If you are staying for the koala count you will need to bring your lunch, which can be eaten in the Fosters Gully picnic area between the activities.

Activity 2 - Koala Count

1.30pm

The Friends of Morwell National Park will be carrying out the annual 'Koala Count in the Park' on Sunday 21 October 2012.

Willing participants are requested to meet at the Kerry Road - Fosters Gully car park at 1.30pm to commence the Koala count.

The 'Koala Count in the Park' event is part of the long term strategy to document the numbers and health of the koalas within the Morwell National Park.

Bring your family and friends together and enjoy a pleasant stroll in the park while simultaneously helping the team in spotting the resident koalas that may be found in the park.

Participants are advised to bring suitable clothing and footwear applicable for the weather conditions, and if possible, bring a pair of binoculars as it certainly makes it easier to spot the koalas.

