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# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

*Newsletter – June 2013*

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaeon.net>  
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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. This month it will be a brief newsletter. I was unable to attend the May activity, so the report for this activity will be very brief.

Over the last month I completed the hike along the Grand Strzelecki Track between Tulga-Bulga and Morwell National Parks with a local school group. I will give you a report about this walk in this newsletter.

## May Activity Report Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May

This month the group returned to the Grand Strzelecki Track to continue work on removing weeds from Billy's Creek. The group continued on from the twelfth creek crossing moving towards to the park boundary. The creek level remains relatively low, especially for this time of year.

As a worrying sign is that the Grand Strzelecki Track beyond the park boundary has many tutsan plants, both seedlings and advanced plants in fruit. Many plants grow along beside the track, in the undergrowth, in the track itself and on the creek banks. Many tutsan are growing very well far away from the creek. With many tutsan upstream it will be very difficult to eradicate tutsan from the park. There are also willows in Billy's Creek upstream from the park.

## June Activity Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June

The group will meet at 10.00am at the Kerry Road car park to complete some track maintenance. You will need to bring your lunch and suitable clothing for the weather conditions on the day.

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

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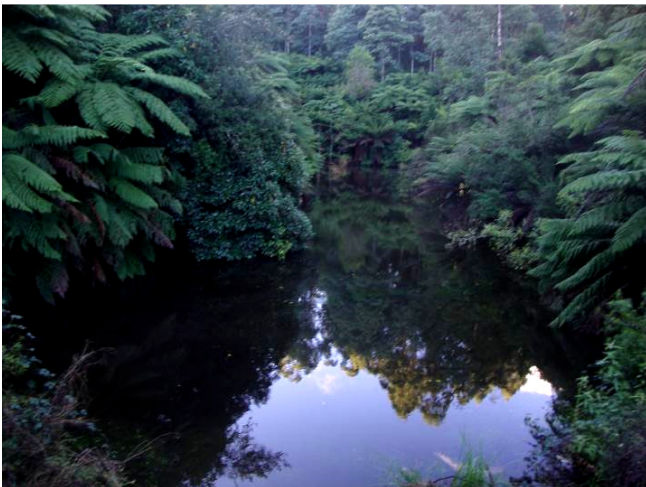
**Other members:** Mary Austin, Wendy Steenbergen, Margaret Barker, Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Reg Felmingham, Wendy McDonald, Joan Sikkema, Matt Campbell and Kerry Proud, Emma Pallett and Rod Haggith, Australian Plant Society (Latrobe Valley).

## Grand Strzelecki Track

The walk started off at the Tugla-Bulga end of the track in very grey and overcast conditions. While we organized ourselves and prepared our gear, it rained and this was the first of many showers during the day. Each student was to carry the gear they needed for the next two days, which meant each student was carrying a pack of about 15-20 kilograms. Students worked in groups and each group needed to carry a tent, sleeping bags, sleeping mats, stove, extra clothes and food. The year 10 and 11 students were all studying the VCE subject Outdoor and Environmental Studies and this trip had them using the skills and knowledge gained in classes.

13 students undertook the walk and in rotation groups of students were responsible for map reading and navigating the group. Over the two days the trip covered about 26 kilometers. This is not long for a two day hike but the terrain in the second day would be more difficult.

On the first day the walking was easier with the whole track being vehicle width and the group being about to easily walk two abreast. Much work had been done recently on this track. During this first day there was only one creek crossing, so many did not get wet here being piggy-backed across by other students. Throughout the day there were regular showers, resulting in us always being damp.

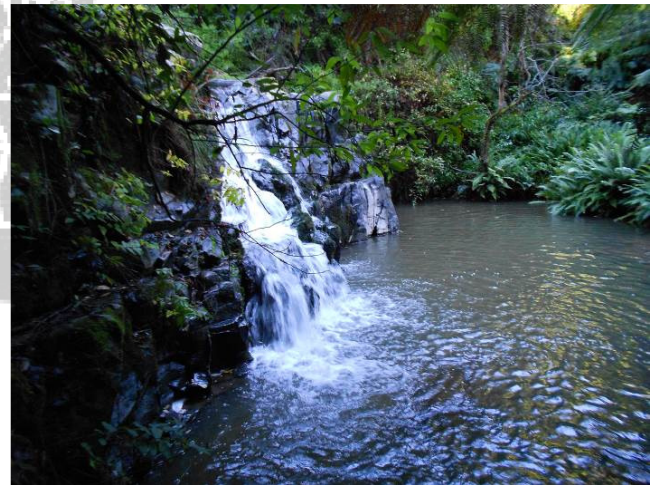
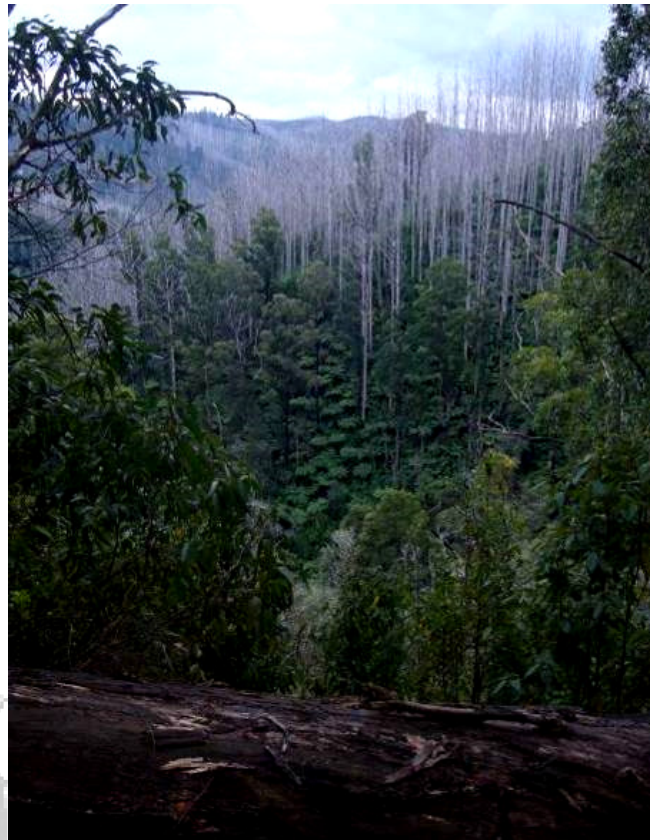


Beside one section of the track it was burnt out where there had been a recent lightning strike. This track had been used as a containment point for the firefighting. The scorched blackened environment on one side was contrasted by the healthy bush land on the other.

We walked through areas burnt by the 2009 Delburn fires. It was great to see the regrowth and regeneration of the bush.

The last section of track was closed because of nearby logging so the track detoured onto the road. A few kilometers along the road got us to the camp site an hour before dark. The students then set up their tents and sleeping swags and started on making their dinners. Most students were challenged by using their cooking stoves and were still cooking when it became dark. Eating and cleaning up in the dark, while avoiding the rain, was more challenging.

Early the next morning (from 3am) we heard the sound of log trucks and tree felling. The next morning we were up before dark, preparing for some difficult hiking. It did not rain this day but we got wet from 60 creek crossings. Many students tried to skip across stones at the creek crossings to avoid getting wet. The students set a cracking pace all day looking forward to getting home.



The track conditions on this second day were very different. The terrain was difficult and track in places was soft under foot. The track was mostly single file but it is well signposted, so getting lost is not a significant concern. In some sections, some scrambling is required. The track has been improved since last year with steps cut into steeper banks and markers included. In some parts the track has changed with trees falling across the track. Scrambling over or under large fallen trees was required in some parts.

Lunch was taken early at the base of Billy's Creek Falls. This was a very pleasant environment to eat in.

Over the day many leeches were located and removed from our bodies. A few students sustained a few injuries, but they soldiered on to the end. The last few kilometers through Morwell National Park seemed like a stroll compared the terrain covered earlier in the day.