

PO Box 19
Churchill
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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – August 2014

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

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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter.

The last of the scheduled Green Walks (although more may be planned) will be held on Sunday 24th August at 10pm. The walk will be along the Foster's Gully track and you interested in the walk you will need to meet at the Kerry Road car park. The past walks have been greatly successful with groups ranging from 10 to 30 in size. Some people have returned the next month to complete a different walk. The walks have been enjoyed by each group with a great spirit amongst the walkers.

The plans to erect new animals boxes along the Baniff's Rd entry track has been postponed since there have been sponsorship problems which need to be resolved. The sponsors want to focus around the Sale/Maffra area. If the sponsor pulls out, the volunteers organized to erect the boxes will also not be available. Based upon this we have asked Matt to follow up whether our group can become the sponsor and we ourselves erect the boxes that have been built.

Ken sent a message to the group about the lichen brochure featuring the lichens of Morwell National Park. The fold-out brochure will be printed and funded by three different groups including ours. There will be no charge for the completed brochure, but a gold coin donation will be accepted. Ken has adapted the Friends of Morwell National Park logo for the brochure.

The council's plans to remove trees along Junction Road was discussed. Concern was expressed about the removal of the many mature trees along the road. Mike on behalf of the group wrote a submission to Latrobe City Council and this part of the submission (given below) highlights the groups' concern:

The Friends of Morwell National Park Inc. wish to register an objection to the clearance of native vegetation along Junction Road at Jeeralang Junction. This vegetation contains numerous old Eucalypts that provide many hollows utilised by native wildlife for nesting sites, including some rare creatures, such as Powerful Owls. Members of the Friends Group volunteer considerable time and energy in projects which include revegetation of degraded areas in the Billys Creek section of Morwell National Park (which has frontage to Junction Road) and surveys of nestboxes installed into the revegetated area. More than 60,000 trees have been planted into the Park over the last 25 years, the majority of which are still too young to have formed nesting hollows. Surveys of our nestboxes have shown an increasing trend of occupancy by several species of native animals and birds. These creatures have found their way into our revegetated areas from the surrounding remnants of native vegetation, which includes the vegetation along Junction Road. A substantial link between the two sections of Morwell National Park and to other nearby areas of native vegetation is provided by the trees along Junction Road.

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

President: Mike Beamish

Vice-President: Ken Harris

Secretary: Beryl Nelson

Treasurer: John Barker

Publicity: Peter McDonald

Public Officer: Beryl Nelson

Newsletter Editor: Darren Hodgson, hodgson.darren.d@edumail.vic.gov.au

Other members: Mary Austin, Margaret Barker, Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Matt and Kerry Campbell, Wendy McDonald, Joan Sikkema, Neil Slater, Wendy Steenbergen, Australian Plant Society (Latrobe Valley).

Recently Yvonne Azlin sent a message to all the members of FMNP, to say that she enjoyed the monthly newsletters. It can take a time before they are read but she finds them of great interest. She commented that Wendy has not changed a bit. She was concerned that stuff that she has written are now in the "history" section. The History Guru may like to know that Eulalie Brewster is still living in Inverloch, old and not quite as fit as she was but still the history collector of old.

At the beginning of August we will have our Annual General Meeting. This hoped that all members can attend. Included is the membership form to complete if you are unable to come to the Annual General Meeting. Thanks goes to Margaret and John who again, have offered to host the meeting for us.

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 2014/2015.

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

Address:.....

Email:

Friends of Morwell National Park Annual General Meeting

Sunday 3rd August
1.30pm

10 Walker Parade, Churchill

A committee meeting will follow the Annual General Meeting

At the conclusion of both meetings we will have Afternoon Tea – Bring a plate

John's Jottings

John has continued with his historical collecting and this month his jotting comes from a tape transcript "Billys Creek – Stewart McFarlane interview with Tom Lawless from 20th February 1994.

"In the 1850's, the Stuart family moved from Port Fairy looking for land to settle. They went to Bacchus Marsh but the decent land was all gone. So they travelled on to Gippsland (a journey of 4 to 5 weeks) to take a holding.

In the 1860's supplies brought in to Rosedale from the sea port at Port Albert, then by pack-horse to the area.

In the 1870's they carried in some chooks and built a "wattle and daub" house. Native cats, called tiger-cats* were prevalent. They lived in hollows in the trees and caught birds. They caught a disease about 1900 and died out. The only birds left were the kookaburras.

Rabbits had spread from the Kerang district and became a huge problem. They ate the place out and farming was no longer viable. The big hares which are still here today were native to the area. The fences built to keep the hares out were easily breached by the smaller rabbits which ate the crops."



* *On making enquires there were tiger-cats at Billys Creek in the late 1800's which mysteriously died out around 1900 from the spread of a disease. They were actually a stripped species of Quoll which were native to the area.*

July Activity Report

At this activity we had John, Neil, Matt, Tamara, Wendy, Beryl, Brenda, Cathy, Mike, Darren and ranger Craig. Great to have a large group together on a damp day. The group meet in the car park and caught up on the news over the last month.

The park opposite the Billys Creek entrance to the park has been improved over the last month. The many willows along the creek have been removed. This section of the creek contained many large willows which greatly impeded the creek flow. The photos below show the improvements made.



The group travelled to the Reidy's Road entrance in four vehicles. The trip up the hills moved us through layers of fog and mist and we knew that during the day, sunshine was going to be a rare sight. The track in was rough and had a few trees growing in it so the vehicles were left outside the gate and group carried their gear into the top of Blue Gum Hill. It was surprising that at the top of hill the ground was very sodden. As we walked in, light drizzle started to fall, as it would regularly during the day.

The group started where the defined track to top of Blue Gum Hill finishes and started working on the fence there. The group split in two with each group working in opposite directions. After an hour the groups joined again when one group (heading east) had removed the fence to a cliff where it was not safe to continue. The groups then worked together up the hill removing barbed wire and star pickets. The rolls of barbed wire and star pickets were collected together for later removal.

The groups worked towards the top of Blue Gum Hill until lunchtime. During that time much barbed wire was collected.

Craig was "good enough" to capture me in a photograph on his phone, so this has been included. Normally holding the camera is enough to keep me out of these pages. At least photos of my favorite subject, Wendy return this month.

After lunch the group moved again to the top of Blue Gum Hill where they worked across the top and started downhill along the spur track. Craig put some track markers up to help walkers to find the top of Blue Gum Hill. Now with the fence gone, walkers have two paths to the top of the hill.

Next month we will return to try to remove the remainder of the fence beside Blue Gum Hill spur track.





August Activity

Sunday 17th August

The group will meet at 10.00am in the Junction Road car park. This month we continue to work upon removal of the fence adjacent to the Blue Gum Hill spur track. We will need the star picket remover, gloves and wire cutters. You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.