

PO Box 19
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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – September 2015

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

Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. This month we have a bit for you. Included is the report from the last activity, minutes from the recent Annual General Meeting (including 2014/15 President's Report and Ranger's Report) and Committee Meeting.

John's Jottings

This month I am providing ongoing snippets lifted from the Morwell National Park Management Plan (1998) which I'm sure will make interesting reading for you too. I have split the heading **4.2 Pest plants and animals** into 2 parts - I will deal with plants this month and animals next month.

Management Plan continued from last month.....

"4.2 Pest plants and animals" Part 1

"Under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (Vic.) and National Parks Act, there are statutory obligations to control noxious weeds and vermin in National Parks.

A large number of introduced species occur in the Park, some of which are declared noxious weeds in Victoria. Many are introduced agricultural species resulting from a history of clearing, grazing and pasture establishment, particularly in the Billy's Creek Valley, which was previously grazed.

A control program for pest plants in the Park has been developed and is being implemented. Particular problem species in the Park are Blackberry, Ragwort, Nightshade, Wild Teasel and Purple-topped Verbena.

A rare variety of nightshade, *Solanum douglasii*, is an aggressive agricultural weed that spreads quickly and dominates other ground species. Problems are arising when control programs for Blackberry are successful because of subsequent invasion by nightshade.

Wild Teasel inhabits creek banks, and Purpletopped Verbena is hampering natural regeneration in the east of the Billy's Creek Valley. Both these species are proving difficult to control.

Sweet Pittosporum occurs in the Park (section 3.2) and has the potential to be a major management problem. It is a vigorous invader of moist forests, and this is occurring in the Park at present. It has the ability to form a dense canopy, excluding less competitive species (due largely to the lack of light).

The high level of weed invasion from adjacent pastoral and residential land is a major concern (section 6.2)."
To be continued next month.....



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

President: Matt Campbell

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, Mike and Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Kerry Campbell, Brenda Chetham, Tamara Leitch, Wendy McDonald, Joan Sikkema, Neil Slater, Wendy Steenberg, Australian Plant Society (Latrobe Valley).

August Activity Report

At this activity we had Matt, Tamara, Beryl, John (briefly) and Darren. We had apologies from Wendy and Margaret; and Cathy and Mike who were travelling OS. The group met in the car park and caught up on the news since the AGM earlier in the month. Matt reported that there had been problems with the hard drive and reading the memory cards used in the motion cameras. Matt was fortunate to get the hard drive repaired by CTCIT in Traralgon.



Latrobe Community Health has organised a new program of Green Walks for the remainder of 2015. Matt told us about the first Green Walk of the new walk program where Matt and Mike took three walkers around Foster's Gully. The upcoming Green Walks planned for Morwell National Park are:

Tuesday 8 th September 10am	Billy's Weir Walk (meet at Baniff's Rd car park)
Thursday 1 st October 10am	Foster's Gully Walk (meet at Kerry Rd car park)
Tuesday 3 rd November (Melbourne Cup day) 10am	Billy's Weir Walk (meet at Baniff's Rd car park)
Wednesday 2 nd December 10am	Foster's Gully Walk (meet at Kerry Rd car park)

For registration and program updates go to www.heartfoundation.org.au/greenwalks or call 1300 362 787.

Matt also informed us that the motion cameras that he set up last month near some deer tracks in the Billy's Creek area had taken photos of at least six deer at the two sites. Many people have told us of deer they had seen and neighbors have sighted deer on their properties adjacent to the Park, but none of us from the friends group had seen them. This is the first physical evidence of the elusive deer. It is believed that they are fallow deer.

We our small work group we were able to drive into the Park in one vehicle. We drove to an area where many small but deep holes had been dug. We hope that these holes were dug by bandicoots. There has been no reported sighting of bandicoots in the Park although they are found in a five kilometer radius of the Park. The group set up the two motion cameras in the area hoping they will capture photos of bandicoots.

After this the group found a Blackwood hanging down over the track impeding vehicles and walkers. Matt used the chainsaw to clear the tree from the track. Next we moved to the beginning of the Blue Gum Hill track and as we walked in we saw quite a few advanced Tutsan beside the creek. Using a slashe we cleared the beginning of Blue Gum Hill track.

Over the day we had seen many animals. Along with many birds we had seen three different mobs of kangaroos along with a wallaby, trout and koala.



September Activity

Sunday 20th September

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

Friends of Morwell National Park

Annual General Meeting Sunday 2nd August 2015

Annual General Meeting declared open at 1.40pm

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

Apologies: - Craig Campbell (Ranger), Wendy McDonald, Rose Mildenhall.

Previous AGM minutes held on 3rd August 2014 were read and accepted as a true account.

Moved by Ken Harris, **Seconded** by John Barker.

The President's Report was read and accepted - **Moved** by Ken Harris, **Seconded** by Mike Beamish.

Ranger's Report was read & accepted - **Moved** by Matt Campbell, **Seconded** by Peter McDonald.

Treasurer's Report was read and accepted - **Moved** by John Barker, **Seconded** by Mike Beamish.

The Treasurer reported that we have 14 financial members for 2014-15.

It was decided to re-invest the Term Deposit – earlier in the year for 3-4 months.

Motion was **Moved** by John Barker that Incorporation fees (\$54.00) be paid for this financial year, and that membership fees will remain the same - \$10.00 per person, \$15.00 per family or group (**Seconded** by Beryl Nelson) - passed unanimously.

Election of Office Bearers:-

President – Matt Campbell (**Moved** – Mike Beamish, **Seconded** – Peter McDonald).

Vice President – Ken Harris (Moved – Beryl Nelson, **Seconded** –Wendy Steenbergen)

Secretary/Public Officer - Beryl Nelson (**Moved** – Cathy Beamish), **Seconded** - Mike Beamish)

Treasurer - John Barker (**Moved** - Ken Harris, **Seconded** – Beryl Nelson)

Newsletter - Darren Hodgson (**Moved** – Matt Campbell, **Seconded** - Ken Harris)

Publicity – Peter McDonald (**Moved** – Matt Campbell, **Seconded** – Beryl Nelson).

General Business

Draft Rules dated 2nd August 2015 were discussed by members and the Special Resolution was passed & accepted as our new Constitution, unanimously.

Annual General Meeting declared closed at 2.30pm

Friends of Morwell National Park

President's Report for 2014 to 2015

We have come to the end of another year, the 29th year of the Friends of Morwell National Park and it falls to me once more to write the annual report, (my 19th)! We have continued to be active throughout the year with most activities being well attended.

A great addition to our newsletter has been added throughout this year. John Barker has gone back through old newsletters and extracted sections under the heading John's Jottings.

Last August we set out to work on fence removal and found that strong winds had brought down many trees over the track. We spent the morning clearing the Billys Creek and Weir tracks and after lunch cleared the Fosters Gully Track. Fence removal was postponed

Green Walks in association with the Heart Foundation have continued, with walks in most months. A few more are scheduled, but their future is uncertain through lack of funds. Thanks to all, especially Matt who have led these walks.

A brochure on the Lichens of Morwell National Park has been published by Ken Harris and Simone Louwhoff. It became available in December selling for just \$2. The Friends contributed \$500 to the printing cost and have already received over \$200 back from sales.

On 6th September we set up an extra outing as part of the Bushcare Major Day Out. We made it our first winter/spring check of the nest boxes along Billys Creek. It was good to find 45 Sugar Gliders in the boxes, but since none of the public joined us I don't think we will contribute to the Bushcare event again.

In September the postponed fence removal on Blue Gum Hill was resumed. Big progress was made, but a few hundred metres still remain. Next time access needs to be from the top via Reidys Road.

A grant was obtained for installing the displaced footbridge over Billys Creek to connect the Braniffs Road entrance to the park. The work was completed in April, including repairing the washed out culvert near the Butt Butt Track.

The Friends have obtained two motion detection cameras for use in the park for monitoring the wildlife. Matt has been installing and monitoring the cameras since October. In April Matt wrote a first report of the results in the newsletter. Results have been good and have added two new mammals to the park list. The introduced European Hare was photographed at one site, and the native Bush Rat was found at another. During the year, another new mammal was added to the park when Matt spotted the native Water Rat in Billys Creek, while driving out at night after one of my Moth survey evenings.

October was our annual Koala count. In the morning a walk on Stringybark Ridge looked for orchids and found a good variety. The afternoon Koala count covered three tracks and found a total of 8 koalas, including one young cub with its mother. An Agile Antechinus was also met in Fosters Gully.

On 16th November several of us attended the annual Parks Victoria barbecue for all friends groups in the area.

Our November outing was the annual Butterfly Orchid survey. Matt and I did the survey finding quite a good flowering year for the orchids and a few new plants. The rest did some track maintenance work.

We learned in November that Rob Howell our ranger and friend for a good many years has retired and we wish him well in his retirement.

In December we held our own Christmas barbecue at the Kerry Rd picnic area. Prior to the barbecue two parallel activities took place. Some led a Green Walk round Fosters Gully, while the rest of us started our summer nest-box survey, finding 34 Sugar Gliders and 6 Agile Antechinus in the boxes along sections A, B and C of the Billys Creek Track.

In early January an extra activity was planned to collect Blue Gum seeds, but an earlier check on access to the site found there was hardly any seed available, so the activity was cancelled.

Our January activity was used for some nest box repairs and re-erection and to finish the summer nest-box check, which added 14 more Sugar Gliders and 1 more Agile Antechinus. Finally we erected an additional 6 nest boxes, made for us by John Barker.

February saw the team dividing in two, with one group doing some track-clearing on the Lodge and Clematis tracks, while the second team started from the car park weeding along Billys Creek for tutsan and other weeds and meeting a black snake. In the afternoon an old well by Billys Creek (roughly boarded over) was investigated.

Weed removal along Billys Creek was continued in March.

During March, several of us attended a course on Koala Monitoring, based on locating scats beneath trees. We will be giving serious thought to incorporating this technique into our own koala monitoring program.

April saw a double activity. In the morning we erected another 6 new nest boxes made for us by the Morwell Men's Shed, beside the entrance track from Braniff's Road. In the evening, we had a barbecue at Kerry Rd, followed by a spotlight walk in Fosters Gully while I set up my mothing light sheet. It was not a good night for mothing, with only 14 moths coming to the light, but the spotlight walk found possums, koalas and owls.

May saw us back again to weeding along Billys Creek, getting up as far as the first bridge. As we reached the new footbridge we were pleased to meet with Rob Howell and it was good to chat with him. He had come to look at the new footbridge.

In June we were back at track work in Fosters Gully area. We divided into two groups again. One group clearing the Fosters Gully Track, while the second group accompanied by temporary ranger John, cleared obstacles on the Stringybark Ridge Track and parts of the West Boundary Track. At the outer end of the Stringybark Ridge Track, we found a Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, going in and out of a hole high in a Mountain Grey Gum.

And in July we did our first true winter nest-box check. We were able to complete checking all the boxes, including the new ones although only 1 of the new ones showed any evidence of use so far. 29 or more sugar gliders was well below our summer counts, but it was a very cold morning and we suspect that many nest-box occupants were hidden in the abundant leaf litter in the boxes.

Finally I must thank our rangers, especially Craig Campbell for their help and company on many of our activities. And thanks to all our members for their care for the park and the great work they have done during the year. Especial thanks go to our secretary Beryl Nelson, Treasurer John Barker and newsletter editor Darren Hodgson and to Mike Beamish for his continued work on grant applications.



Ken Harris

2nd July 2015

Friends of Morwell National Park AGM 2015

Rangers report

Another year gone (seems so fast) with the Park continuing to receive plenty of visitors and one big improvement to facilities. Parks Victoria staff spent time trimming and brush-cutting Fosters Gully Track as well as clearing fallen trees on Stringybark Track. The Project Fire Fighters (Summer crew) were again able to be used to do mowing and other track maintenance work although owing to some management changes we seem to have less of them.

Items of significance:-

- ❖ Action to prevent cattle entering the Park along Billy's Creek seems to have been successful.
- ❖ Following contact from a landowner a hazardous tree assessment was undertaken on a tree adjoining private land at the end of Tebb Terrace and remedial work performed.
- ❖ Students from Traralgon College undertaking the CLIC (Connected Learning in Community) program have spent a few days in the park installing motion cameras and retrieving data.
- ❖ The heap of old wire and fence posts at the top of Blue Gum Hill, collected by the friends, was removed and taken to the tip.
- ❖ The fencing around the Kerry Rd picnic area was damaged by a falling limb and a section of the fence was required to be rebuilt, again.
- ❖ The new toilet was pumped out for the first time.
- ❖ Mark & Craig took the new Polaris 500 UTV around Lodge and Clematis Tracks clearing fallen trees, hedge-trimming and brush-cutting.
- ❖ The barbecue battery has failed and been replaced. A spare has been located in the shed, left on a charger.
- ❖ Finally the old footbridge has been reinstalled over Billy's Creek near the Braniff's Road ford. This is a great result and many thanks to the Friends for successfully obtaining the grant and for their contribution to this project. A new culvert was installed up near the old dam at the same time and work done in the creek to prevent washing out at one corner.

My sincere thanks to the members of the Friends group who put so much time and effort in to assisting Parks Victoria with management and maintenance of the Park. We would not be able to keep the Park to as high a standard as it is without you.

Friends of Morwell National Park

General Meeting held Sunday 2nd August 2015

General Meeting declared open 2.35pm.

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

Apologies: Craig Campbell (Ranger), Wendy McDonald, Rose Mildenhall.

Minutes of previous meeting held on 3rd August 2014 were read and accepted as true account.

Moved by Cathy Beamish, **Seconded** by Ken Harris

Business arising from Previous Meeting:-

- Motion cameras are located in the Park for 3 weeks and one week being downloaded – very time consuming. Everything is being recorded.
- Nesting boxes monitoring was completed last month – with fewer animals being accounted for but the cold winter morning, could have led to some being underneath the leaf litter found in many boxes.
- The new camera is working well and allows the monitoring to be completed in a day.
- John has made some signs to indicate to visitors, that chainsaw work is taking place in the vicinity.
- Fungi Brochure has been published and is selling well through interested groups and schools.
- Cathy asked for a video link to be on U-Tube with a link to Friends MNP, for the manufacturer of our nesting box camera, to promote to other customers.

Inwards Correspondence:-

25th July 2014 – Latrobe City Council letter acknowledging Friends of MNP objections to native vegetation removal from intersection of Lindners/Junction Rd to the Jumbuk Road intersection.

26th July 2014 - Commonwealth Bank – Acct Details of Term Deposit & Renewal Notice.

31st July 2014- Email from Chris via Rob Howell regarding Bushcare Major Day Oct 2014.

2nd Sept 2014 Victorian Environmental Friends NET 88 August 2014.

13th October 2014 – Letter from Environment & Landscape Performance Division – regarding our unsuccessful submission to revegetate Blue Gum Hill - Communities for Nature Grant.

14th October 2014 – Email from Environment & Landscape Performance Division advising that our application for Local Landscape Enhancement Grant had been successful.

17th Dec 2014 - Email from Bonnie Dawson regarding the dates of the Green Walks up to June 2015.

Dec'14 – May 2015 – Emails relating to Green Walks, meetings and workshops from Debbie Mitchell / Bonnie Dawson.

18th Dec 2014 – Vic Environmental Friends NET 89 Nov 2014.

25th Feb 2015 - Email from Yvonne Alpin regarding the early days of the Park and enquiring about the well along Billy's Creek.

25th Feb 2015 – Email from Nicole Walsh (via Ken Harris) asking for members interested in Koala Monitoring Training Workshop on 25th March 2015.

10th March 2015 – Victorian Environmental Friends NET 90 Feb 2015.

12th March 2015 – Letter from Latrobe City Council advising that the Native Vegetation Removal Planning Permit, along Junction Road has been withdrawn by the applicant.

12th May 2015 – Email from Bonnie Dawson regarding funding cut for Healthy Together Vic and Be Active by State Govt. & asking for volunteer to continue walks.

25th May 2015 – Victorian Environmental Friends NET 91 May 2015.

25th May 2015 – Email from Yvonne Alpin via Mike – reflections on the early days of Morwell National Park.

28th May 2015 Email from Dept. of Environment, Land, Water & Planning – acknowledging they had received the final report for the bridge work & payment will be processed.

Outwards Correspondence:-

20th July 2014 – letter to Latrobe City Council from the Friends of MNP objection to native vegetation removal along Junction Road.

6th August 2014 – Lodgement of annual Statement to Consumer Affairs Victoria.

20th August 2014 – Application complied by Mike Beamish for a grant under “Communities For Nature 2014” to revegetate Blue Gum Hill.

4th Dec 2014 – Letter to CBA bank from Treasurer instructing the bank that the Friends group will withdraw \$2,500 and re-invest the rest.

18th Dec 2014 – Reply to Bonnie Dawson’s email from Beryl regarding dates for Green Walks.

13th Feb 2015 – Letter to Parks Victoria from Treasurer advising that the Friends group will add \$1,500 to the successful \$5,000 grant towards the siting of pedestrian bridge over Billy’s Creek plus a further \$700 to repair and replace culvert adjacent to Billy’s Creek Track.

26th Feb 2015 Mike Beamish replied to Yvonne Alpin’s email enquiry about the well along Billy’s Creek.

13th May 2015 – Local Landscape Enhancement Grant Program Finance Report submitted/signed off by Mike Beamish and Craig Campbell to Dept of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, so that the grant money can be released for payment.

13th May 2015 – Matt Campbell replied to Bonnie’s email (12th May) to say that he would be happy to continue to participate and lead the Green Walks.

General Business:-

Green Walks – funding has been cut by State Govt, Latrobe City not involved now. Need for the guides of the respective walks to note the people who are attending plus there needs to be a person at the rear to make sure everybody keeps together on the same track.

Latrobe City brochure on the Morwell National Park isn't going to be done, suggested the Friends group do an activity to ascertain whether the interruptive signs are still relevant.

Old relocated bridge construction has been completed over Billy's Creek but the culvert on Zig Zag Track is being washed away.

The meeting resolved that another GPS wasn't necessary when we could use/get hold of ones owned by members.

John has had a look at Braniffs Road notice board – seemed solid enough, John suggested a coat of paint to brighten up the appearance.

Members suggested that the Friends group need magnetic car signs, whilst working in the Park – to inform the public who we are. This need has arisen as it appears that Sunday work for Rangers has been non-essential under new State Government guidelines. It was decided that the Friends of MNP would write to the CEO (Parks Victoria) to object to this proposal.

Secretary suggested that a dedicated email address be established to the Friends group, to keep emails etc. separate from office bearers' personal email plus official correspondence be put onto a USB belonging to Friends of MNP.

Matt Campbell asked the meeting about helping Grant Pengelly who has been destroying European Wasp nests in the Park, at his own expense - was decided that Matt make contact with Grant to ascertain how much the chemicals cost and the Friends would help pay for them.

Calendar of Activities:-

Date:	Activity:	Venue and Time:
January 17	Weed removal/Reidy Road access	Junction Rd, 10.00am
February 14	Fence removal	Junction Rd, 10.00am
March 20	BBQ & Spot light walk/Moth survey	Kerry Road, 6.00pm
April 17	Weed removal	Junction Rd, 10.00am
May 15	Weed Removal	Junction Rd, 10.00am
June 19	Track Maintenance (Silvertop & Muttonwood tracks)	Kerry Road, 10.00am
July 17	Nesting box survey	Junction Rd, 10.00am
August 7	AGM	To be advised, 1.30pm
August 21	Track Maintenance	Junction Rd, 10.00am
September 18	Track Maintenance & Foster's Gully pegs	Kerry Road, 10.00am
October 16	Orchid Walk Koala Count	Kerry Road, 10.00am & Kerry Road, 1.30pm
November 20	Orchid Survey/Koala scat survey	Kerry Rd, 10.00am
December 18	Nesting box survey/ Christmas Function	Junction Rd, 9.00am & Kerry Road 1.00pm

Meeting declared closed at 3.50pm