

PO Box 19
Churchill
3842



Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – January 2017

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaeon.net>
Official Address of FMNP - contactfmnp@gmail.com
A0016319X

Hello everyone, Merry Christmas and welcome to this month's newsletter, the first for 2017! Over the last month Tamara and Beryl attended the Parks Victoria Kookaburra Awards held at the Heyfield Wetlands.

The Friends of Morwell National Park group were nominated for the category of 'Conserving Special Places - Group Award'. The award was won this year by the Annual Hawkweed Survey at Falls Creek, a program which runs for about 6 weeks each year and involves volunteers walking in a line through alpine grasslands, searching for flowers of highly-invasive hawkweeds. Last year the survey incorporated around 1200 volunteer hours.

After the ceremony, Roger Fenwick (Manager Regional Operations for Eastern Victoria) mentioned the Strengthening Parks Victoria project, and input PV has received from community members on services and experiences they would like to see provided in the future. As well as more funding for assets and more involvement with Aboriginal cultural groups, he acknowledged that an overwhelming number of requests was for more rangers to be present on the ground. He would also like to see this happen, because he believes that staff developing good relationships with the



community is the best way to encourage volunteers to get involved, and to enhance people's experiences of our natural areas. Speaking to him later, he explained that it costs around \$150,000 per year to employ one new ranger (including recruitment, wages, vehicle, equipment) so the Victorian Government needs to set aside a significant amount of money in order to put on an extra 50 across the state. Currently, PV appear to be hiring people for short stints to assist with particular projects, rather than offering longer contracts. In our situation, where we would just like a currently-employed ranger to attend a few weekend days per year, it would not be so expensive, although their time may need to be shared between multiple parks. This arrangement would also allow us an opportunity to update the ranger on track conditions, survey results or interesting sightings, and to discuss with him his ideas for our park, and what we would like to see done.

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

Official Address of FMNP - contactfmnp@gmail.com

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).

John's Jottings

This snippet on the activities of the Friends of Morwell National Park was sourced and edited from early Newsletter files.

"I can read the Proposed Constitution, which was unanimously accepted with little alteration by the dozen or so members who were present. Then we went on to formally set up our Committee. After some light-hearted banter over afternoon tea, the following people were nominated and endorsed in their positions:

PRESIDENT:	Yvonne Aplin
V.P./ACTIVITIES CO-ORDINATOR:	Frank Carter
TREASURER:	Judy Lambert
SECRETARY:	Peter Bryant
ORDINARY MEMBERS:	Neil Grigg & Margaret Loughborough

Our thanks to these people for accepting these positions, and to Ken Harris, Rob de Souza-Daw, Yvonne Aplin and Frank Carter who did so much work during December - February to present a workable Constitution and to get us to the stage of adopting it and setting up a formal committee.

The gathering present went further to discuss the issue of Fees. After some discussion in the light of the newly adopted Constitution and some previous discussions, it was unanimously agreed that the fees be set at:

SINGLE: \$10

FAMILY: \$15

These fees would cover the period until the end of the 1988/1989 financial year (viz. June 30, 1989), and entitle a single person to one vote at any formal meeting of the Friends, and entitle a family to two votes at any formal meeting of the Friends."

Minutes signed by Peter Bryant



December Activity Report

At this activity we had Matt, Peter, Wendy, John, Rose, Mike, Cathy, Beryl, Tamara and Darren. We were joined by Summer Ranger Bernie, who was keen to know the activities of the group. The group was happy to see a ranger at an activity for the first time this year.

The group met in the car park and caught up on the happenings from over the last month. Matt reported that since the last activity, the Butterfly Orchid survey was completed over two days by himself and Tamara. Four of the five plots were surveyed. Matt stated that over the New Year he planned to put out the motion detection cameras and last time when they were on the Clematis Track they recorded a number of wallabies, echidnas and wombats.

A JSA for the day's work was completed. Matt, Peter and Wendy drove to the start of the Grand Strzelecki Track to investigate the condition of this track. They found the track very overgrown with the undergrowth over the top of the vehicle. Many eight foot foxgloves, thistles and large Tutsan bushes blocked the track. The job was way too big for them, so it needs to be slashed. It was clear that nobody has walked this track, with it being so overgrowth. Hopefully Parks staff can slash this track over the next month.

The rest of the group started the nesting box survey. The group battled through the long, wet grass and found many of the boxes in use. Over the survey, 53 sugar gliders, 4 agile antechinus, 3 eggs and 1 ringtail possum were found. At a few of the boxes the animals came out of the boxes to greet us. It was good to see the new boxes being well used. The number of sugar gliders will increase when the video footage is checked more carefully with some boxes being a mass of furry bodies. John and Bernie were busy making repairs to boxes that needed to be refixed to the trees.

Matt has noticed that a few members that regularly attend the monthly activities are missing a hat and/or name badge. If you would like one or either or both, let Matt know and he will get them organized in the New Year.



After Matt, Peter and Wendy had travelled to the Grand Strzelecki Track, they went to Stringybark Track to clear this of fallen branches. The chainsaw was used to remove a few obstructions. This was the second month in a row where this track has been cleared. All groups finished between 12.30 and 1.00 and moved to Kerry Road for the Christmas BBQ. We were greeted by the sight of Matt and John cooking away on the barbeque. Margaret had brought the food for the BBQ and the group enjoyed a wonderful meal to celebrate the end of the year.

January Activity

Sunday 15th January

We will travel the Blue Gum Hill track to complete some track maintenance. The track is very overgrown and slashing will be made this track walkable.

For these activities you will need to bring clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.

