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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – September 2017

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

Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. Over the last month the group has celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Morwell National Park. In 1967, Morwell National Park was official proclaimed and opened and the group gathered at the Churchill Hotel to celebrate. It was great to see such a big turn out and everyone had an enjoyable night.

It was wonderful to have a few of the founding members of the Friends of Morwell National Park to share their experiences. A special mention goes to Yvonne and Brian Aplin who had travelled a long distance to join us for the evening.



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: Margaret Barker, Mike and Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Graeme Busch, Kerry Campbell, Tamara Leitch, Wendy McDonald, Rose Mildenhall, Grant Pengelly, Wayne Pengelly, Joan Sikkema, Wendy Steenbergen, 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.

15th September, 1988

Dear Friends,

After the depression of a year ago, it was a joyous occasion to celebrate the arrival of another cub, as we conducted our Annual Koala survey last Sunday. This was most noteworthy as there have only been two previous sightings - September & October 1986.

Congratulations to the proud "parents"!!

Due to only a small gathering of 10 people, we conducted our survey in 3 areas: Fosters Gully, North & East Boundary, and Stringybark. A total of 15 Koalas were found, plus the cub."

"From the statistics gained it would appear the number of Koalas is reasonably constant, and that September is the best survey time. However, the reasonably short time over which we have covered the Park does not lend itself to any significant results yet. One could in fact argue that the numbers appear to be dropping. This may not be true as we have not covered all the areas we have traditionally covered in the past.

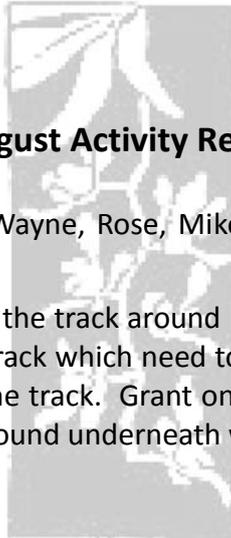
We would encourage all members to help at our next survey in order to make for a clearer picture of our Koala population."



August Activity Report

At this activity we had Beryl, Ken, Grant, Wayne, Rose, Mike, John, Tamara and Darren. Matt was also there for the meeting before the activity.

The purpose of today's activity was to clear the track around Potato Flat. Before reaching Potato Flat there were a few trees down across Billy's Weir Track which need to be dealt with first. The first was top section of a Silver Wattle which had fallen across the track. Grant on the chainsaw did an excellent job of clearing the many broken branches. The track sign found underneath was fortunately unmarked.



The next tree across the track was near the first creek crossing. The group dealt with this before moving onto Potato Flat. The second creek crossing (approaching Potato Flat) is getting difficult to safely traverse via vehicle. A hole has developed making the crossing difficult. More stone or some concrete fence posts at the crossing will make it easier to cross.

Around Potato Flat two more trees were cleared using the chainsaw and the track was slashed clearing the stinging nettles and other weeds from the track. Now there is a full vehicle loop around Potato Flat.

A group walked to Billy's Weir to find that no other trees were down between Potato Flat and Billy's Weir. It was observed that there was more water in creek (finally – so far it has been dry this winter) making tutsan removal from the creek not viable. There was enough water in the creek so that the water at the Weir was flowing over the overflow.



We all had an early lunch at Potato Flat while Rose walked back to the car park.

After lunch went travelled to Kerry Road to clear some trees down across Stringybark Track. One vehicle travelled in with the chainsaws while the rest of group walked in. We used one vehicle to cut down upon damage to the side track, but the vehicle was needed since it was too far to carry the chainsaws and safety gear.

The walkers broke into groups but could not, on a few attempts, find the others in the vehicle with the chainsaw. Later we heard the chainsaw, but could not assist so the walkers returned to the picnic area. It was great to see many walkers out in both parts of the Park.

August Activity

Sunday 17th September 10.00am

The group will meet in the Junction Road car park to complete a walk along the Grand Strzelecki track to the park boundary. We will complete any track maintenance required while travelling along the track. This track has many creek crossings so gumboots or waders would be useful for the numerous creek crossings. You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing suitable for the weather conditions on the day.

Friends of Morwell National Park

Annual General Meeting Friday 18th August 2017.

Annual General Meeting declared open at 7.45pm.

Attendance: - Beryl Nelson, Wendy Steenbergen, Darren Hodgson, Ken Harris, John & Margaret Barker, Mike Beamish, Peter & Wendy McDonald, Matt Campbell, Rose Mildenhall, Wayne & Grant Pengelly, Graeme Busch, Joelle Champert.

Apologies: - Melina Bath MP, Cathy Beamish, Kerry Campbell.

Previous AGM minutes held on 7th August 2016 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 Matt Campbell, **Seconded** by Margaret Barker.

Ranger's Report – No response from Parks Victoria

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

The Treasurer reported that we have 20 financial members for 2016-17.

The Term Deposit was re-invested last July 2017.

Motion was **Moved** by John Barker that Incorporation fees (\$56.90) 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 Matt Campbell) - passed unanimously.

Election of Office Bearers: -

President – Matt Campbell (**Moved** – Ken Harris, **Seconded** – Peter MacDonald).

Vice President – Ken Harris (Moved – Matt Campbell, **Seconded** – Joelle Chambert)

Secretary/Public Officer - Beryl Nelson (**Moved** – Ken Harris, **Seconded** – John Barker)

Treasurer - John Barker (**Moved** – Ken Harris, **Seconded** – Wendy Steenbergen)

Newsletter - Darren Hodgson (Moved – John Barker, **Seconded** - Peter McDonald)

Publicity – Peter McDonald (Moved – Graham Busch, **Seconded** – Beryl Nelson)

Annual General Meeting declared closed at 8.15pm

Friends of Morwell National Park **2017 Presidents Report**

It's been a very busy time for me personally of late and the need to write this report has become a sudden realisation. That, coupled with me feeling, and another group member hinting, that last years' report may have been a tad long, will see a much shorter version this year.

I would like to start by thanking you all for the work you have done this past year. We've ventured out in all conditions and kept doing the job we love. But while I don't want to dwell on it too much, it's been getting harder to do what we do due to the lack of support from Parks. Two years ago we were still getting a Ranger along to each activity, now we've not only lost that but more and more is being expected of us.

Actually, I will go on about it a bit more. I've felt it's affected the morale of the group to a degree. A couple of people have told me they feel the same. Some days it feels like we have no direction. While we've always made the calendar ourselves (I think?), Rangers provided a guiding hand and a sense of authority. At some activities we've had track maintenance planned, for example, only for us trying to think of work that needs to be done. We've also had more paperwork pushed our way and now with the recent launch of Park Connect, despite its possible advantages, the responsibility of Parks is to tick a box to OK our planned work.

We're constantly told that we are valuable to Parks Victoria and they couldn't operate without us but we are giving our free time (and sometimes more) and are now expected to dedicate even more of our time because the budget doesn't allow for anyone at Parks to do what they used to do.

I guess the key word above is 'budget' because while I sound harsh on Parks, there is an issue there with funding. Still, a lot of the money they do have, in my opinion, is being poorly directed.

OK, enough of my rant, on to what we have done. When you think back we did achieve a lot. We've kept up our surveys such as the nest box inspections, orchid walk and Koala count, Butterfly Orchid survey and of course our mothing night and spotlight walk. But on top of this we've cleared a lot of large obstacles from tracks, opened up both ends of Blue Gum Hill and kept the creek largely clear of Tutsan and other weeds, especially from the weir downwards.

We also now have a decent selection of tools, allowing us to do our work unassisted, both the fun stuff such as the nest boxes and the more typical maintenance work. Sadly I found out that, despite what many of us thought, our private vehicles are not covered for damage incurred doing what we do so that may become a future issue. Also on another personal note, the motion sensing cameras have not been out much the past 12 months due to time constraints but I do hope to resume them once the days lengthen. We did get them out a few times and we also had the Traralgon High Schools kids place some in the Park.

Friends of Morwell National Park now also has a Facebook page. It will be interesting to see if it gains us any new members or awareness but I suppose it can't hurt to have it? We must be gaining some kind of fame as we even managed to get a politician along to the July nest box survey. Melina Bath introduced herself at the Junction Rd car park and joined in with the first handful of box inspections. Sadly it was our lowest count. This may have been due to the weather as the counts on cold weather seem to be down on those done in December.

I would like to wrap up by thanking everyone for their efforts this past year. We've had some very good turn outs and it's great to see people getting along for even half a day, if that's all they can spare. It all helps and it all makes our day out a lot easier. I'd also like to thank those who took up office bearer roles, Ken as Vice President, Beryl as Secretary, John as Treasurer, Darren for putting together the newsletter and of course Peter for Publicity. That is not to take away anything from anyone else, you've all chipped in and worked efficiently and harmoniously. Let's hope we can do it again this year.

Friends of Morwell National Park

Friends of Morwell National Park

General Meeting held Friday 18th August 2017

General Meeting declared open at 8.20pm

Attendance: - Mike Beamish, Beryl Nelson, Darren Hodgson, Ken Harris, Wendy Steenbergen, John & Margaret Barker, Matt Campbell, Peter & Wendy McDonald. Grant & Wayne Pengelly, Rose Mildenhall, Graeme Busch, Tamara Leitch, Joelle Champert

Apologies: Melina Bath MP, Cathy Beamish, Kerry Campbell.

Minutes of previous meeting held on 7th August 2016 were read and accepted as a true account
(**Moved** by Beryl Nelson, **Seconded** by Matt Campbell)

Business arising from Previous Meeting: -

No communication has been received from Grand Strzelecki Track Committee regarding their request for help to maintain the track, Friends of MNP communicated our resolution that we were only prepared to maintain the track to our boundary.

Matt Campbell put in a submission for a grant for blackberry control above the Weir but nothing has been heard from Parks Victoria.

Slashing in the Morwell National Park beyond the Weir is being done despite the area, not appearing on Parks Victoria database.

Inwards Correspondence: -

12th July 2016 email from Craig Campbell informing the Friends Group that Shame Atkins will be “Ranger-In-Charge” for Parks Victoria.

25th July 2016 email from Richard Appleton asking for support with GST from Parks Victoria & Friends of Morwell National Park.

1st August 2016 – email from Richard Appleton regarding the condition of GST and money that is needed to keep it open.

15th August 2016 Email from Richard Appleton (HVP & GST) regarding Koala Working Group Meeting (Sept 1st) – for all stakeholders to collaborate for the benefit of our koalas.

22nd August 2016 Tax receipts emailed from Department of Justice related to Lodgement of Minutes & Registration (\$56.80).

26th August 2016 – Email from Dr Steb Fisher (President GST) inviting interested members to GST Map launch 16th October 2016.

9th September 2016 - Email from Craig Campbell (Acting Ranger Team Leader Latrobe) that Parks Victoria is commencing a program of community consultation to gain public support to strengthen the organization.

24th October 2016 - Email from Secretary VEFN regarding AGM to be held 19th November 2016 and VEFN’s 2016 Best Friends Awards ceremony to be held at Harbour Esplanade Docklands.

November 2016 - Friends NET newsletter No 97.

9th November 2016 - Email from Felicity Brooke Acting Community Engagement & Partnerships, Eastern Region – Invitation to Kookaburra Awards & Public Choice Awards being held at Heyfield Wetlands Information Centre Sunday 4th December 2016.

15th November 2016 - Email from Felicity Brooke (Eastern Region) inviting the Friends group to Kookaburra Awards, as the Morwell National Park was among the nominations.

5th December 2016 - Email from Chris Lange moved into Reidy’s Road and interested in receiving Newsletter and becoming involved with the Friends Group.

6th December 2016 -Email from Helen Dixon (Central Gippsland District PV) congratulating MNP on our nomination for a Kookaburra Award and advising of award winners.

2nd January 2017 - Email from Mike & Cathy Beamish, regarding the death of Mary Austin – an early member of the Friends Group.

24th January 2017 - Email from Yvonne Aplin regarding the date Morwell National Park was declared a National Park. Thought it was a great idea to celebrate 50th anniversary, wanted to be kept informed if anything was planned.

27th February 2017 - Email from Ryleigh Coombes enquiring about becoming involved with the Friends Group.

5th March 2017 - Email from Matt Campbell (President) requesting numbers attending 50th Anniversary celebrations of Morwell National Park to be held at Churchill Hotel, time to be advised.

14th March 2017 - Email reply from Leesa Riley to Matt Campbell's (President) letter regarding Parks Victoria policy about vehicle accidents/personal injury within the Park. There is no coverage for volunteer vehicles, must go through own insurance company. Personal injury is covered by Parks Victoria insurance.

26th April 2017 - Email from Celeste Jenning (Consultant) working with Churchill & District Community Association to review its membership, operations and processes.

10th June 2017 - Email from Felicity Brooke (Eastern Region Parks Victoria) regarding the establishment of Climatewatch Trails in some National Park.

17th June 2017 - Email from Ken Harris notifying the Friends Group that he is doing a series of interviews on ABC radio Sale focusing on local wildlife in Morwell National Park – Monday – Friday from 19th June.

19th June 2017 - Email from Angie Robertson (Latrobe City) offering information regarding the date of Morwell National Park's proclamation.

Outwards Correspondence: -

8th June 2016 - Email from Matt Campbell (President) to Richard Appleton (GST) stating that the Friends Group can only be of limited assistance regarding Grand Strzelecki Track that is we will monitor the track up to the boundary.

6th December 2016 - Email to Chris Lange regarding membership/activities etc.

15th January 2017 - Letter to Hon Lily D'Ambrosio from Matt Campbell (President) regarding the lack of funding for maintenance work/Ranger on Sundays. More and more is being left to the Friends Group to do.

23rd February 2017 - Email to Leesa Riley (State-wide Volunteer Co-Ordinator) from Matt Campbell regarding the situation where Friends Group vehicles are involved in accidents within the Park.

2nd March 2017 - Email from Ryleigh Coombes enquiring about membership to the Friends Group.

General Business: -

Much discussion was centred around Parks Victoria attitude to the Friends Group, lack of co-operation and manpower to do track maintenance which leaves the Friends Group no alternate but to do the job ourselves, which is having an effect on morale within the group.

Plus, more paperwork is being directed our way, which normally was the Ranger's responsibility before an activity.

Angela Robertson (Latrobe City) did a lot of work on Morwell National Park history and proclamation. Wendy McDonald suggested a thank you letter be sent, from the Friends Group.

The Climate Watch project is doing ahead, 10 National Parks being chosen, Felicity Brooke (Parks Victoria) wants at least 2 National Parks in the Gippsland area included.

Parks Connect a Parks Victoria initiative online where members can register and the Friends

Group monthly activities have to be submitted onto the database and Parks just tick the box for approval – more work for us!!!

Calendar of Activities:-

Date:	Activity:	Venue and Time:
January 21st	Weeding/Track Maintenance	Junction Road – 10.00am
February 18th	Weeding/Track Maintenance	Junction Road – 10.00am
March 18th	Weeding/Track Maintenance Barbecue & Moth Survey/Spotlight Walk	Junction Road – 10.00am Kerry Road – 5.30pm
April 15th	Nesting Boxes Survey	Junction Road – 10.00am
May 20th	Weeding/Track Maintenance	Junction Road – 10.00am
June 17th	Track Maintenance	Kerry Road – 10.00am
July 15th	Weeding/Track Maintenance	Junction Road – 10.00am
August 5th	AGM	TBA 1.30pm
August 19th	Track Maintenance	Junction Road - 10.00am
September 16th	Nesting Boxes Survey	Junction Road – 10.00am
October 21st	Orchid Walk Koala Count	Kerry Road - 10.00am Kerry Road - 1.30pm
November 18th	Orchid Survey	Kerry Road 10.00am
December 16th	Nesting Boxes Survey Christmas Function	Junction Road – 8.30am start Kerry Road - 1.00pm

Please be advised that this activity calendar is only a guide, activities may change on the day.

Meeting declared closed at 9.20pm

