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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – May 2019

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A0016319X

Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. Over the last month the park has been reopened to the public with all sections except the Stringybark Ridge Track and Silvertop Hill are now open for public use.

Over the last month, bushfire recovery work has been completed in the southern fire affected parts of the park. All hotspots and areas of fire risk have been removed.

The barbeque at Kerry Road Picnic Area is still not working. It has been over a year that this barbeque has not been working and it is very sad considering how few facilities are in the park, that they cannot be working. The barbeque has been scheduled for repairs for a long time and it is lax that it is still not working.

John's Jottings

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

"January 29, 1990

Hello,

Please find enclosed the Activities Program for this year. As you can see, tree planting in the Billy's Creek is area is a major priority. This may become tedious as the year goes by, however it should be rewarding for the Friends to make such an obvious mark on the landscape of the new area.

One other thing: before each activity, give some thought to what tools and equipment (e.g. gardening gloves, plastic bags etc.) you may be able to provide to make the task more effective. Also, remember to bring a cup, to save on using the foam cups for the cuppa afterwards. As my brain's normally in neutral on a Sunday, I'm usually the worst offender.

Finally, it would be great to see some not-so-familiar faces this year. Not only is there heaps of work to be done, but it would be nice to be able to put some faces to the names on the membership list. February 18 is as good a time as any to start.

See you round, Steve"



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April Activity Report

This month we had Matt, Ken, Tamara, Beryl, Rose, Wayne and Darren in for the planned activity. We also had Gordon along for his first activity. We had apologies from Graeme and Grant. It was a good turn-up for an activity on Easter Sunday.

The group met in the Kerry Road Picnic Area to plan what to tackle for the day. Matt reported that a successfully Junior Ranger program ran in the park during the last week. The 'Junior Rangers' investigated Foster's Gully.

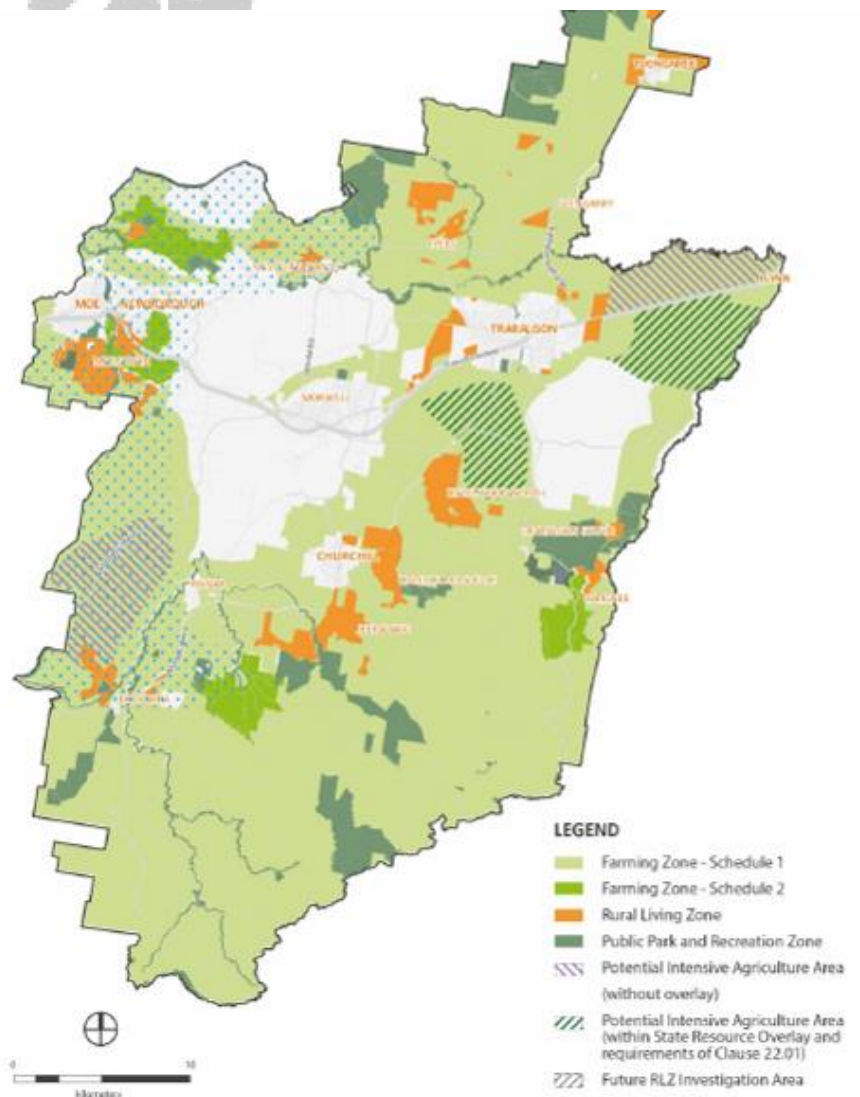
Parks had received a complaint from a member of the public about the condition of the Blue Gum Hill Track. We think that the concern was about the stinging nettles which grow around the start of this track. We normally slash this track but have been unable this year since the equipment we use to do this was stolen and Parks have yet to replace (via insurance) this lost equipment. It is sad that Parks passed this complaint onto us, when ultimately park maintenance is their responsibility and we don't have the equipment to do this work with.

Matt attended the first meeting related to the planned Latrobe City Biolink (with Jay who was representing the Yinnar/Yinnar South Landcare Group). They are working on a plan to create a biolink from the Strzelecki Ranges to the alpine ranges which will help create habitats for genetically significant local koala populations. The strategy aims to create a biodiversity corridor that would stretch from Boolarra towards the northern boundaries of the shire. Many local property stakeholders are taking part.

The plan includes identifying significant flora and fauna within the proposed biodiversity corridor including nationally significant Strzelecki koala populations. The corridor will link into the western and northern boundaries of Morwell National Park.

Part of the strategy would be working with the Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Advisory Committee to explore mine rehabilitation areas to form part of the biolink. EnergyAustralia has established biolinks within its own boundaries (they have rehabilitated more than 1300 hectares of land and planted 25,000 Strzelecki gums in a drainage corridor), within the planned footprint of the biolink.

EnergyAustralia plans to create a lake in the mine void, which would be three-

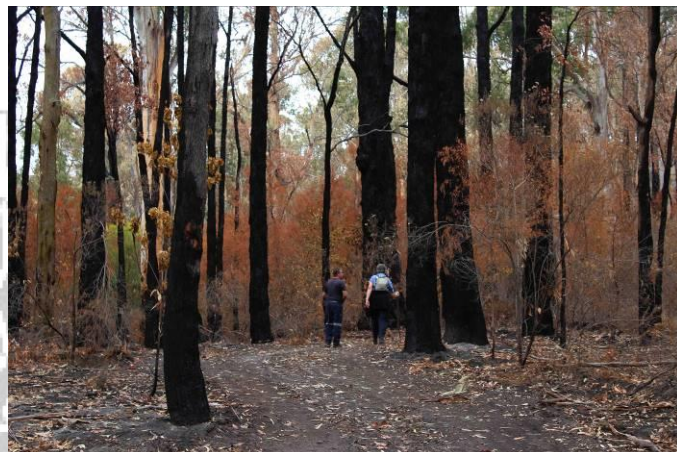


and-a-half times bigger than Blue Rock Dam, and link with Latrobe and Morwell rivers.

Federation University is also on board with Latrobe's proposed biolink and had recently completed a major genetic study of Victorian koala populations. The study showed local koalas were of clear conservation significance as they were genetically more diverse than other Victorian koalas.

For the day's activity we completed track maintenance on the Stringybark Ridge Track. We walked around the track removing a few branches which were down across the track. There is still one branch down (and across the track) near the end of the return leg of the track. The park is very dry with little undergrowth and a lot of fallen leaf litter.

The walk around Stringybark gave us the opportunity to investigate a few areas to see the effects of the bushfire. A patch of sheoaks on the West Boundary was just outside of the area burnt but a small patch of banksias (also on the West Boundary) could not be found, so these trees may have been lost in the fire. On the Muttonwood Track, the track has been secured but will be problem in the future when rains wash out the track foundations.



As part of fighting the fire, the fire services cut a new track across the hillside as a firebreak and as a way to move their equipment in to fight the fire. This track has been 'filled in' with fallen trees and branches; and the original walking tracks have been reinstated. The crews who have worked to reestablish this area have done a great job with the fire break now being difficult to identify and the walking track reconstructed into a solid surface of vehicle width. The many trees and branches which had fallen across the walking tracks have now been removed.



Fire Break reinstated



Seat and track marker (top of Stringybark Ridge Track) saved from the fire



Stringybark Ridge Track cleared



Track heading to Silvertop Hill

The hope that in the near future that we will get consistent rains so that there will some regrowth around the Park and in the burnt areas. The ground currently is very dry and a lot of rain will be needed for the soil to take in the moisture.

May Activity

Sunday 19th May 10.00am

The group will meet in the Junction Road car park to complete track maintenance and weeding. You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.

