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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – July 2020

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Hello everyone and welcome to this months' newsletter.

Corona Virus (Covid 19) continues to be a problem around the world. In Australia the contracting rate has slowed and fewer people are dying from it. Over the last week there has been a spike in Victoria with 10-30 new cases a day. Some social and home restrictions have been lifted and dropped again in reaction to the increase in cases. The rest of Australia is being advised not to travel to Victorian 'hotspots'. For the rest of Australia there are only a few new virus cases.

Around the world nearly half a million people have died and over 9 million have contracted the corona virus. In Australia, over 7,500 have contracted the corona virus and 103 have died. These rates have slowed and over the last week some restrictions have been lifted.

Over the last month we have received a report from ClimateWatch which has included the Foster's Gully Track as one of their monitored trails. ClimateWatch is a citizen science program where community members and school students, measure and monitor select species. The part of the report that focused upon Morwell National Park is included with this newsletter.

June Activity Report

At this month's activity we had Ken, Beryl, Mike, Cathy, Graeme, Matt, Rose and Darren. Tamara was an apology for this activity.

This was our first activity for three months, since we have been unable to meet over the previous months because Corona Virus social restrictions have not made it possible to undertake activities. With there being a recent increase in Victorian cases, social restrictions are being tightened again and future activities are at risk. We will need to wait and see what the social rules are closer to our next activity.

We were welcomed with a range of paperwork to be completed and notes to be read before the activity could begin. Along with registering on ParksConnect, we each needed to physically sign in with contact details and emergency contacts. We had the JSA to read along with instructions from Parks about how to operate during a pandemic and a 14 page document about the cleaning of Parks equipment.

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We met in the Kerry Road car park and at a socially appropriate distances, caught up on what has happened over the past three months. Matt reported that fox baiting has been occurring in the Park and as part of this a bandicoot paw print has been found in the Grand Strzelecki Track section of the park. We currently have no recorded sightings of bandicoots in the Park. Matt and Tamara have placed our motion detection cameras in the area in the hope to collect camera footage of the bandicoot. Parks also plan to place some cameras but paperwork and permits need to be completed first.

We have received another pole mounted camera. We have received the last of the cabled cameras from the supplier, since all cameras they are now supplying are wireless. The hope is that we will be able to interchange pieces from this camera with our existing camera and make some repairs to the existing camera. Hopefully we will be able to test the new camera at next months' nesting box survey.

Sadly the vehicle track through Matt's property has been very wet and badly dug up by vehicles accessing Stringybark Track. The hope is that this track can be repaired when it dries out.

For the days' activity we went to Foster's Gully to widen the track. The group worked along Foster's Gully removing branches and foliage that had grown into and around the track. At the sitting area, a few trees and branches have come down across the seats. The chainsaw was used to remove the larger branches while loppers removed the smaller branches.



Near the sitting area, a few varieties of fungi were located.



Some Coral Tooth fungus on a dead Blackwood tree.



Golden Fingers fungus

The sign at the beginning of the Foster's Gully Track still needs to be repaired.

The group moved back to the picnic area to have lunch. It was great to catch up with everyone after the extended break. After lunch we each were able to return home. The day was not a difficult day but it was good to make improvements to Foster's Gully Track.

July Activity (If we are allowed to have an activity)

Sunday 19th July 10.00pm

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