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# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## *Newsletter – July 2021*

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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter.

This month we have no activity report since no activity was held. The park was closed after extensive storm and flood damage, so the planned June activity was not held.

Overnight on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June, a large low pressure system sent a large storm towards the Latrobe Valley. The storm continued into the next day with strong winds and heavy rainfall. Over the day 150mm fell locally and another 50 mm fell in the following week.

With all of the rain the local creeks and rivers rose quickly. So with little warning the towns of Yinnar and Churchill were isolated by floodwaters and Traralgon was split in half when Traralgon Creek flooded in the center of town. A week later Yallourn Power Station needed to cut back on production related to concerns about the Morwell and Latrobe rivers flooding in their mine.

Around Morwell National Park the impacts of the storm were evident. Many roads were blocked by fallen trees and power was cut for 4-7 days. Some local areas still don't have power reconnected.

Billy's Creek was also one of the waterways to flood. It rose by a few meters to overflow Junction Road and make the road impassible. Junction Road was cut again a few days later when rains returned and Billy's Creek overflowed the road once more.

The impact upon the park has also been large. The park is currently closed and likely to be closed for a while since there is considerable damage to be removed before it will be safe for the public to enter. Most tracks will have trees down blocking the track and on Billy's Weir Track where is also mud and silt from when the creek overflowed onto the creek banks.

With the bridges across Billy's Creek only one remains undamaged. The first bridge to Baniff's Road entrance has been washed away (location unknown) while the bridge at Potato Flat has been washed off its foundations and wedged against trees a meter further down the creek. The bridge near Billy's Weir has swung around and is hard up against the bank. The only bridge to survive is the new bridge replaced after the last big storm.

The following photos will demonstrate some of the damage in the Kerry Road Picnic area and along Billy's Creek. Thanks to Matt for some of the photos.

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Kerry Road Picnic Area – The information booth has survived along with the picnic table close to it.



The tree that fell across the car park (Kerry Road) has also uprooted the main gate.



The picnic table has sustained minor damage and the barbeque is badly damaged.



Multiple trees down across the bridge crossing to Stringybark Ridge Track.

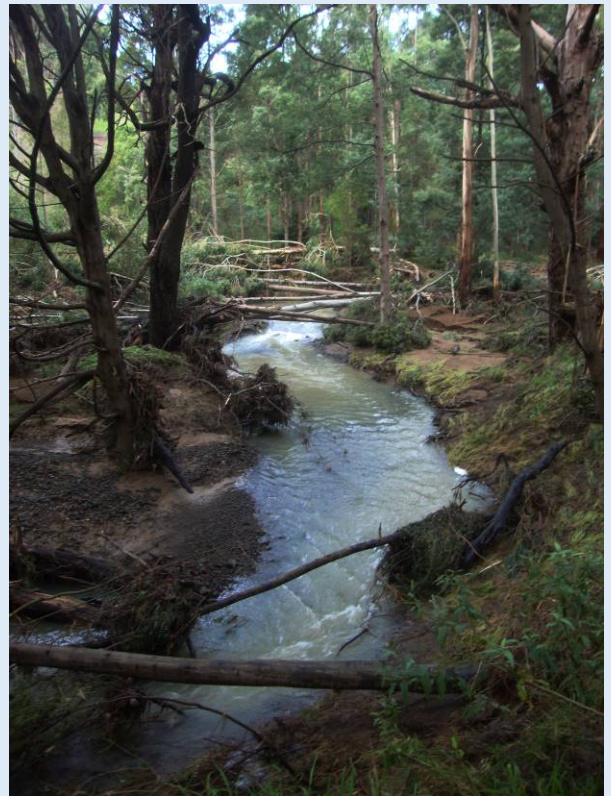


Opposite the Junction Road carpark Billy's Creek has widened the banks and cleared all creek side undergrowth.

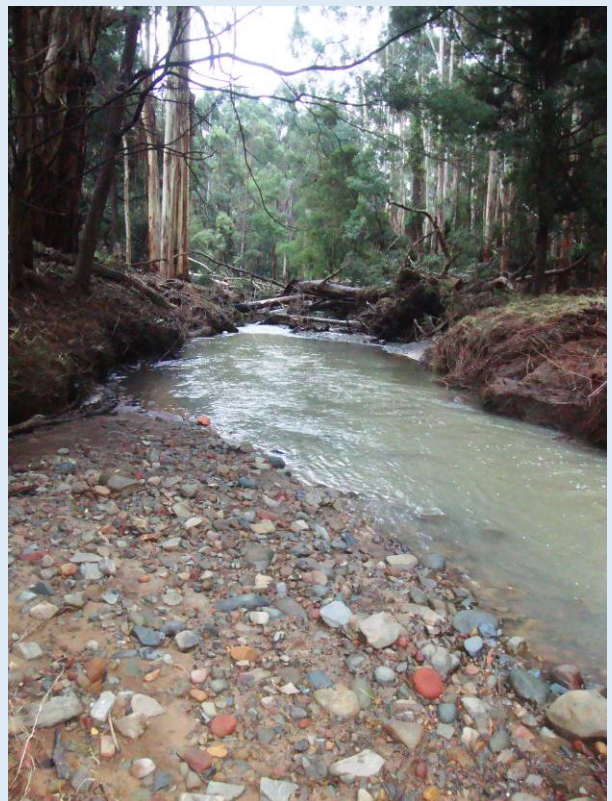




Billy's Creek – The flood and winds have flattened many creek side trees and much of the vegetation.



This is the main walking track! Many fallen trees and at least a foot of mud on the track.



Billy's Creek – Behind the information booth





Location of the Baniff's Road bridge crossing the creek – It has been totally washed away – location unknown.



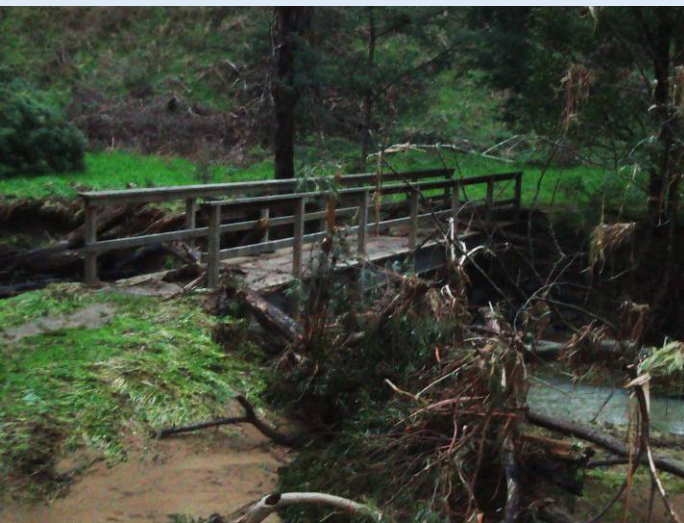
The information booth has survived but the flood water (which at its peak was at least two feet above ground level) has washed fallen limbs against the structure.



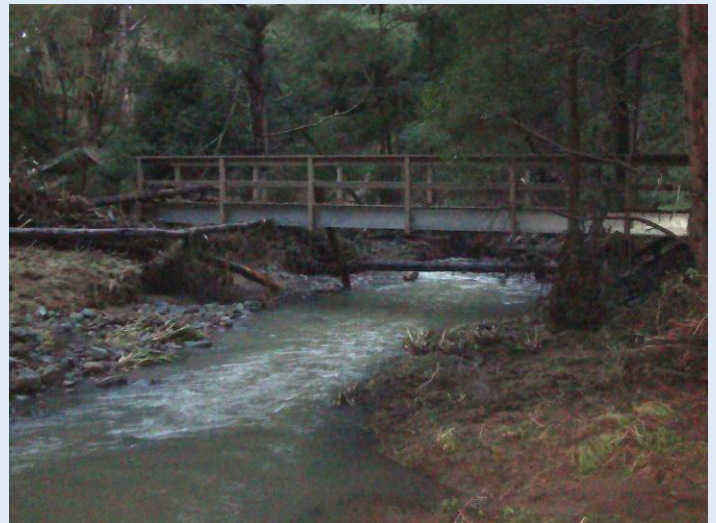
Behind the information booth the creek has changed alignment.



At each of the vehicle crossings to the creek, much mud and silt has filled in each crossing.



The 'new' bridge has held up very well through the floods and storms. The flood at its peak was over the bridge. There is creek mud on the bridge surface.







The bridge at Potato Flat has been washed off its footings. It has been moved down creek by the force of the water. The center handrails have also broken away.

### **July Activity**

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July 10.00am

The group will meet in the Kerry Road car park to plan the day ahead. The task is likely to be track maintenance and we will determine where our efforts will be most beneficial on the morning. You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.