

PO Box 19  
Churchill  
3842



# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## *Newsletter – October 2021*

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaeau.net>  
Official Address of FMNP - [contactfmnp@gmail.com](mailto:contactfmnp@gmail.com)  
A0016319X

Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. In country Victoria we have recently finished lockdown 6.1 while Melbourne remains in lockdown with restrictions not planned to finish until October or November.

In news related to Morwell National Park, parts of the park have reopened to the public. The Foster's Gully and part of the Billy's Creek tracks have been opened. In June, a massive storm caused great flood damage along Billy's Creek and many fallen trees and branches across the rest of the park resulted in the Park being closed. For over three months the park has been closed. The removal of dangerous hanging trees and branches over the Foster's Gully and the beginning of the Billy's Creek tracks, have meant that these tracks can now be opened. Similar works still need to be completed around the rest of the tracks. We await these works before the other tracks can be opened.

Even though the park has been closed many people have been out walking in the park.

The storm has washed out three of the four bridges across Billy's Creek and Gabrielle reports that it is planned to replace them through insurance. It is planned to have these and other repairs (like the barbeque and picnic tables in the Kerry Road picnic area) made via insurance.

### **September Activity Report**

For our September activity we held the delayed AGM. The AGM had to be delayed because the combination of the Park being closed and health restrictions had made it impossible to have this meeting until now.

Fortunately some parts of the Park were opened for the weekend of the AGM so a meeting could occur. The minutes of the meeting follow later in this newsletter.

For the AGM we had Beryl, Matt, Ken, Wayne, Gordon, Rose, Tamara and Darren. We had apologies from Graeme, Mike and Cathy.

Matt reported that Stringybark track still has a lot of work that need to be done to make it a safe walking track. There is a lot of damage on the western leg of the track that needs repair.

At the conclusion the AGM, Matt, Ken and Tamara went to Silvertop Hill to investigate the daisy plant found earlier in the year. It was hoped that the plant may be in flower making it easier to identify what the plant was.

With the park reopening I have had the opportunity to investigate these parts of the park. With the large numbers of trees that came down in the storm it is not surprising that a number of the nesting boxes have been damaged or come down. Repairs to the nesting boxes will need to be made in future activities.

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President: Gordon Duncan

Vice-President: Cathy Beamish

Secretary & Public Officer: Beryl Nelson

Treasurer: Mike Beamish

Publicity: Tamara Leitch

Newsletter Editor: Darren Hodgson, [darren.hodgson@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:darren.hodgson@education.vic.gov.au)

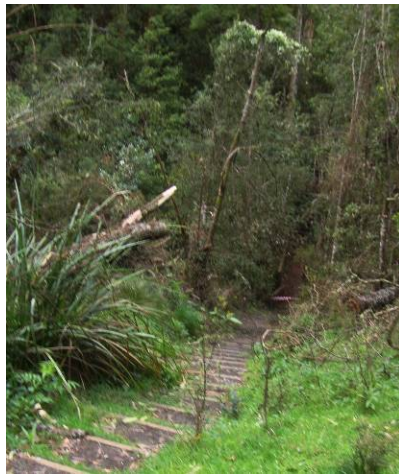
Other members: Eulalie Brewster, Graeme Busch, Matt & Kerry Campbell, Joelle Champert, Wendy Davies, Jay Duncan, Ken Harris, Hayley Mildenhall, Rose Mildenhall, Grant Pengelly, Wayne Pengelly, Chris Sikkema, Joan Sikkema, David Stickney & Wendy Steenbergen.



The creek has many fallen trees across it and the flood waters have realigned the creek in many sections.



The bridge across to Stringybark track has been cleared of many fallen trees, but sadly the bridge has been damaged and will need massive repairs or replacement. (The first photo is from June 2021 and the other photos are from this month.)



## **October Activity (If we are allowed to have an activity)**

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October - Kerry Road

### **Activity 1 – Orchid Walk**

**10.00am**

The first activity will be a walk of around Fosters Gully or Stringybark Track to search for the orchids which can be found at this time of the year. You will need to bring clothing suitable for the weather conditions on the day.

If you are staying for the koala count you will need to bring your lunch, which can be eaten in the Kerry Road picnic area between the activities.

### **Activity 2 - Koala Count**

**1.30pm**

The Friends of Morwell National Park will be carrying out the annual 'Koala Count in the Park'. Willing participants are requested to meet at the Kerry Road - Fosters Gully car park at 1.30pm to commence the Koala count.

The 'Koala Count in the Park' event is part of the long term strategy to document the numbers and measure the general health of the koalas within Morwell National Park.

Bring your family and friends and enjoy a pleasant stroll in the park while simultaneously helping the team in spotting the resident koalas that may be found in the park.

Participants are advised to bring suitable clothing and footwear applicable for the weather conditions, and if possible, bring a pair of binoculars as it certainly makes it easier to spot the koalas.

## Friends of Morwell National Park

**Annual General Meeting held Sunday 19th September 2021**

**Annual General Meeting declared open at 10.10am**

**Attendance:** - Matt Campbell, Beryl Nelson, Ken Harris, Darren Hodgson, Tamara Leitch Gordon Duncan, Rose Mildenhall, Wayne Pengelly.

**Apologies:** - Cathy & Mike Beamish, Graeme Busch.

Previous AGM minutes held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020 were read and accepted as a true account.

**Moved – Ken Harris Seconded – Tamara Leitch.**

**The President's Report** was read and accepted **Moved – Beryl Nelson Seconded – Ken Harris.**

**Treasurer's Report** was read & accepted - **Moved – Tamara Leitch Seconded – Matt Campbell.**

The Treasurer reported that we have 20 financial members for 2020-21.

The Term Deposit was re-invested on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

Motion was **Moved by Beryl Nelson** that Incorporation fees (\$60.10) 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 Gordon Duncan** - passed unanimously).

Election of Office Bearers: -

**President – Gordon Duncan Moved – Matt Campbell Seconded – Rose Mildenhall.**

**Vice President – Cathy Beamish Moved – Beryl Nelson Seconded – Darren Hodgson.**

**Secretary/Public Officer – Beryl Nelson Moved – Gordon Duncan Seconded – Matt Campbell.**

**Treasurer – Mike Beamish Moved – Ken Harris Seconded – Darren Hodgson.**

**Newsletter – Darren Hodgson Moved – Darren Hodgson Seconded – Tamara Leitch.**

**Publicity – Tamara Leitch Moved – Matt Campbell Seconded – Ken Harris.**

**It was proposed, an additional position (Activities Co-ordinator) be created at the next Annual General Meeting.**

**Annual General Meeting declared closed at 10.45**

## President's Report 19/09/2021

Many were saying in 2020 that they couldn't wait for the year to be over due to the COVID pandemic and the effect it had on everyone. Skip forward to 2021 and many, myself included, were saying "give me back 2020". Our AGM last year had to be pushed back until December due to restrictions introduced to try to eliminate the virus. We eventually got to hold the meeting outside in the Kerry Rd car park.

The year started a little brighter with us being able to hold a January activity. We managed, thanks largely to Graeme and Wayne, to replace the pipe at the Junction Rd entrance, which had been collapsing. The rest of the group went off and surveyed the nest boxes and did some weeding. All up, it was an extremely productive day.

The following month we were able to meet again. By this time Disaster Relief Australia (a group of ex-defence force volunteers) had done a lot of work along the Grand Strzelecki Track. As a group, we were also able to repair several boxes and replace others, taking our lead from a list made during the previous month's survey.

March was one of the 'fun days' with a BBQ followed by a spotlight walk and a mothing session. We were lucky to have Cathy Powers along, who had been staying with Mike and Cathy. We set up 3 sheets and had a very successful night, adding many new species including a new lacewing, much to Ken's delight. The walk was a success too, as we had quite a few members of the public along and many got to see things they normally wouldn't, such as a Bobuck and a Boobook. Many compliments were passed on for Tamara and her knowledge of the night life.

A small turnout in April saw us venture around to the Brewster's Rd entrance to look at a few things, mainly what was involved in re-opening Silvertop Hill section D after PV had pushed logs across it following the fire-related clean up and to have a look at how Muttonwood Creek was looking after we had cleared it in 2020. We pulled out a lot of saplings to keep the start clear and then basically had a nice look around. Sadly, quite a bit of Bluebell Creeper was found but the good news was the discovery of a very large daisy, which Ken and Tamara identified. Ken believes it is the same species that had germinated on Stringybark, only to be mowed by PV before we could follow its progress.

The May activity was to be our last one for the year and the group, while originally planning to work on Silvertop Hill, decided that due to the weather, they'd concentrate their efforts on Fosters Gully. The track was cleaned up nicely although, even though it had been serviced that morning, the chainsaw was pretty much useless due to the chain being blunt. Gordon has since had the chain replaced (it was still the original one) so here's hoping we get a few years of hassle-free work from it.

June the 9<sup>th</sup> was a momentous day for 2 reasons. First, I got my first vaccine shot and secondly, one of the worst storms to ever hit the area arrived. I had just left for my 1.30pm appointment when the rain started. By the time I got home again, the first tree had fallen, although at that stage it was just very wet. Then the wind came! The highest gust I had ever recorded at home was around 45kmh. I recorded winds of 80kmh that night. Our friends up at Jumbuk Park had winds of over 140kmh and even lost the roof to one of their buildings. On the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, the place was a disaster. Many of us were unable to get out due to flooding and fallen trees. At this stage nobody knew of the damage the NP had suffered. Over on the Fosters Gully side it was mostly downed trees although the footbridge was badly damaged. However, along Billy's Creek, it was far worse. We lost all but one bridge, many trees were downed, and mud and silt were dumped all along the creek frontage. The NP had to be closed and it was some time before the clean-up could be started. As of today, we are still waiting on large sections to be cleared of dangerous limbs and hopefully insurance can replace the damaged and lost assets.

And that pretty much brings us to now. I had a call from Gab on Friday evening to tell me that Fosters Gully Track is now open, as is a section of Billy's Creek Track, but large swathes of the NP are still waiting to be made safe. I am yet to see Billy's Creek, but I can report that Stringybark is a mess, particularly the Western side. But between the park closure and COVID restrictions, we've been unable to meet until now.

Lastly, I would like to thank all members and the committee for their efforts during what has been a difficult year. People have been ready as soon as we've been allowed or able to meet and despite all the obstacles, we still got a bit done. I would especially like to thank Darren, who has gone out taking photos and producing a newsletter, even when we've not been able to meet. Hopefully the year ahead will allow us to get out a bit more.

## **Friends of Morwell National Park**

### **Friends of Morwell National Park**

**General Meeting held 19<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**General Meeting declared open at 11.00am**

**Attendance: - Matt Campbell, Ken Harris, Beryl Nelson, Wayne Pengelly, Rose Mildenhall  
Darren Hodgson, Gordon Duncan, Tamara Leitch.**

**Apologies: Cathy and Mike Beamish, Graeme Busch.**

Minutes of previous meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020 were read and accepted as a true account     **Moved** – Beryl Nelson **Seconded** – Tamara Leitch.

#### **Business arising from Previous Meeting: -**

No discussion arose out of the previous meeting.

#### **Inwards Correspondence: -**

20<sup>th</sup> July - Email from Matt Campbell with the results of our nest box survey.

7<sup>th</sup> August 2020 – 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021 Emails from Parks Victoria regarding CoronaVirus-19

Volunteering Updates and other information on the status of COVID 19 restrictions.

14<sup>th</sup> Aug – Email from Gabe Browne advising that all volunteer activities are cancelled.

16<sup>th</sup> Aug - Email from Treasurer regarding re-investing the Term Deposit, asking for suggestions.

23<sup>rd</sup> Aug – Email from Consumer Affairs Victoria regarding Annual Statement Notification.

8<sup>th</sup> Sept – Email from Consumer Affairs setting out current restrictions across Victoria for attending meetings.

28<sup>th</sup> Sept - Email from Parks Victoria regarding the launch of Volunteering Innovation Fund.

5<sup>th</sup> Dec – Email from Melinda Bath MP wanting to become a member of the Friends Group.

28<sup>th</sup> Jan – Email from Richard Florey regarding a Grand Strzelecki Track Meeting, with the Friends group.

19<sup>th</sup> Feb – Parks Victoria released the successful recipients of the Volunteering Innovation Fund.

2<sup>nd</sup> March – Email from Churchill & District News asking whether contact details were correct.

10<sup>th</sup> April – Email from Lyn McAlister (Lavalla) requesting whether someone would be available to talk to the students about biodiversity in the Park. Victoria

31<sup>st</sup> May – Email from Parks advertising a zoom meeting about PV Volunteer Manual.

7<sup>th</sup> June – Email from Gabrielle Browne (Ranger) regarding first aid training for volunteers.

8<sup>th</sup> June – Email from Sara McMillan (Remember the Wild) enquiring about our support for their grants associated with offered projects in our area.

27<sup>th</sup> June - Email from Paul Strickland regarding the PV Volunteer Manual follow up.

#### **Outwards Correspondence –**

23<sup>rd</sup> Jan - Letter sent to ProRent thanking them for the use of a concrete saw, used to fix the drain at the Junction Road entrance.

23<sup>rd</sup> Jan – Letter sent to SLD Hire thanking them for use of their tandem trailer and supply of concrete pipe to repair, the drain at Junction Road entrance.

2<sup>nd</sup> May – Email to Lynn McAlister (Lavalla) referring her to Matt Campbell, to arrange a student excursion into the Park.

**General Business: -**

There was much discussion among the Friends Group related to the storm damage to assets within the Park. Billy's Creek track is only partially open in the past week.

Discussion also centred on how the annual Koala Count could be run within the COVID 19 restrictions.

Everyone was reminded that a Working with Children's check, was necessary for volunteering in the Park, an extension has been given by Parks Victoria.

Discussion was centred on using Parks Connect instead of our email address.

**Meeting declared closed at 11.30am 19<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021**

**Message from our new President:**

**I would like to take this opportunity as the incoming President of the Friends of Morwell National Park to thank my predecessor Matt Campbell for his commitment and tireless dedication to the friends and the park itself. It is through Matt that I became a member and I'm thankful for his offer to guide me in my new role. I'd also like to acknowledge and thank Ken Harris for his offer of assistance. For anyone who doesn't me I'm a lifelong resident of the Latrobe Valley and somebody who greatly appreciates the natural world in which we live. In closing I'd like to say that the last couple of years have been difficult for the park with both fire and storm, the latter will take some time to recover from, and I think we would all hope that the next 12 months are far less eventful.**

**Gordon Duncan**

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# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## Calendar 2022

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Activities are scheduled for the third Sunday of each month, with extra days scheduled as required.

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Venue and Time:</b>
January 16	Nesting box survey & Seed Collection	Junction Rd, 10.00am
February 20	Nesting box repairs & Seed Collection	Junction Rd, 10.00am
March 20	BBQ & Spot light walk & Moth survey	Kerry Road, 5.30pm
April 17	Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
May 15	Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
June 19	Blue Gum Hill Track Maintenance & Test plot survey	Junction Rd, 10.00am
July 17	Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
August 7	AGM	Kerry Road, 1.30pm
August 21	Direct seeding – Blue Gum Hill	Junction Rd, 10.00am
September 18	Track Maintenance	Junction Rd, 10.00am
October 16	Orchid Walk Koala Count	Kerry Road, 10.00am & Kerry Road, 1.30pm
November 20	Orchid Survey	Kerry Road, 10.00am
December 18	Seed Collection Christmas Function	Junction Rd, 10.00am & Kerry Road 1.00pm

For all activities, it is BYO food, drinks, suitable clothing and footwear, and other personal items, unless otherwise indicated in the newsletter. Up to date details of each forthcoming activity are provided in the monthly newsletter, which is emailed to members and available to the public on the website.