

PO Box 19  
Churchill  
3842



# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## *Newsletter – July 2022*

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaean.net>  
Official Address of FMNP - [contactfmnp@gmail.com](mailto:contactfmnp@gmail.com)  
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Welcome to this month's newsletter.

### June Activity Report

For the activity we had Gordon, Beryl, Matt, Mike, Cathy, Rose, Joelle, Anita, Caitlin, Graeme and Darren. There were apologies from Tamara, Jay and Ken.

The group met for discussion before the activity started. Matt spoke about a Parks organised excavator that has destroyed the track through his property that many vehicles use to get to Stringybark Track. The excavator removed large trees from the track and graded some sections of Stringybark Track. Matt worked with the excavator contractor to complete some basic repairs to the damaged track through his property. This work was undone by the Fox bait contractor who drove through later in the day. So sadly he undid the repair works. Matt was to go back after the meeting to complete more work on this track. Since Parks staff and contractors are the main users of this track, they need to work with Matt to make the necessary repairs so that they can use it in the future.

In the Banniff's Road area adjacent to (and possibly in) the park somebody has created a new track. They had bulldozed a number of trees in making the track and have built what looks like a pump shed beside Billy's Creek. Whether this is in the park and whether any damage has happened in the Park is being looked into by Parks' staff.

In correspondence from Melina Bath, she has told us about her mentioning of the work of this Friends group in Parliament. At the end of the meeting, the group looked over the JSA for the day's activity. Gordon left after the morning meeting, while Matt collected the keys to the gates from Ken's house.

The activity for the day was to look at the direct seeding plots on Blue Gum Hill. With the bridges washed out in this section of the park, it has been a while since we had seen this area.

After receiving the gate keys the group drove in two vehicles towards Potato Flat. The steep track up at Potato Flat was very slippery so after one vehicle made it up with much wheel spinning, the other vehicle stopped before this hill. This group walked in across the moved bridge to Potato Flat.



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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, Anjali Pal, Anita Pither, Grant Pengelly, Wayne Pengelly, Caitlin Punshon, Chris Sikkema, Joan Sikkema, David Stickney & Wendy Steenbergen.

In walking up to Billy's Weir, we got look over the condition of the park. In a few locations, parts of the damaged bridges still remain beside or in Billy's Creek.



On Potato Flat the sign has ended up in an interesting location.



It was great to see that at the next creek crossing the remains of the washed out bridge have been placed across the creek to allow walkers to access Billy's Weir and Blue Gum Hill. It saved everybody in our group from getting wet feet.



Since we did not know what we were to find on Blue Gum Hill, it was decided to have lunch early on the tables beside Billy's Weir. Around the weir the outlook is very different from what it was before last year's storms. The water levels above and below the weir are now much higher.



Around the Billy's Weir picnic area there is the muddy evidence of vehicles. Besides the tracks dead trees have been felled and dragged away from the track. This situation has resulted in some very muddy areas. Hopefully it will look better in spring.



After lunch the group left most of their gear in the vehicles to tackle Blue Gum Hill. It was great to see that the creek crossings on the side creek had been worked upon to allow walkers to safely cross. After last year's storms these crossings were very steep and difficult to cross.



Sadly as we approached Blue Gum Hill, the animals we found were not native. A flock of 13 sheep had taken over the hill and evidence of their presence can be found all over the hill. Also deer would be common with their dung found in many locations.



When the group got to the test plots what we found was very disappointing. At all plots the only plants that have survived are Vanish Wattle. Very few plants have survived on the plots and gums were very difficult to find. The heavy grazing of sheep and deer over these plots would also have a negative impact on any surviving seedlings. The flock of sheep were found in and around these spaces.



### **July Activity**

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July 10am

The group will meet in the Junction Road car park to complete a survey of the nesting boxes and make repairs to some of the other nesting boxes. You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day. Note - this a change from the original calendar.