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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – March 2023

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaeon.net>
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Welcome to this month's newsletter.

Over the last month Latrobe City Council have been discussing the establishment of a wildlife shelter or local environment information centre near to Morwell National Park. Gordon and Matt were invited and attended a Latrobe City Council meeting to add to their discussions. Matt and Gordon indicated that Friends of Morwell National Park were happy to support the establishment of a wildlife shelter, but they made it clear that it would not be staffed by members of our group. They also suggested that state and federal funding would be required for such a shelter.

Discussion about establishing an information centre—perhaps modelled on the one at Tarra Bulga that is staffed and serves as a place for schools and groups to go to learn about the local environment—resulted in a vote in favour of funding a feasibility study. They answered questions from councillors, including about the purity of the local species of koala, and at least one councillor acknowledged that Latrobe City Council do not do enough to promote the National Park.

Lastly a big thanks you goes to Caitilin who has done a brilliant job of writing the February Activity report and (with Ken's support) collected photos from the activity. Thank you Caitilin.

February Activity Report

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

The focus for this month was to repair the nest boxes that were identified as damaged in the January survey. This would have been accomplished more easily if we had with us the list of boxes in need of repair, but we managed well enough without it. Some people went to gather supplies while others located the damaged nest boxes near the Junction Rd car park entrance. Mike proved to be adept at spotting them.

Equipped with two ladders and the necessary tools, Peter, Graeme, Gordon and Matt began work on the repairs, assisted by other members of the group, who also kept an eye out for anything slithering through the undergrowth, which has dried off significantly in the last month. In most cases, the boxes had come askew because growth of the host trees had dislodged the fixings. One box was missing entirely and was replaced with a new one.

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Seed collection was also listed as an activity for this month, but there were not really any suitable species to collect from. There were, however, several thickets of thistle and ragwort growing along the creek and beside the path that did not escape the lethal attention of Graeme, Rose, Caitilin and Peter. While they hacked and chopped and snipped at these weeds, the rest of the group went ahead to examine the nest boxes near Butt Butt Track. Mike's superior spotting skills came in handy once again.



After lunch, Matt, Ken, Mike, Peter and Graeme crossed the creek in their vehicles to repair boxes along Weir Track. The others walked back to the car park, meeting up with a group of bushwalkers who had just completed the Grand Strzelecki Track over two days. It's good to see the track is being used again.

Throughout the day, a number of eastern grey kangaroos were seen along Weir Track and in the neighbouring properties. Mike met a glider near a nest box in the area of Butt Butt Track, and Ken was delighted to spy a pseudoscorpion, less than 1cm in size, under bark on a tree not far from the Junction Rd entrance. It is a close match to one found in the park in 1995, identified as *Conicochernes sp.01*.



March Activity

Sunday 19th March 5.30am

BBQ, spot light walk and moth survey

The group will meet in the Kerry Road picnic area for a picnic dinner, spot light walk and moth survey.

Please note the later starting time for this activity. Members of the Entomological Society of Victoria will join us for a picnic at the Kerry Rd car park. This will be followed by an evening walk and (weather permitting) the setting up of a moth sheet. The event will conclude around midnight.

You will need to bring your own food and drink for the picnic and wear clothing and footwear suitable for the conditions on the day. Torches will also be useful for the evening walk.

Anyone who is curious about the night life or insect life in Morwell National Park is welcome to join us for this activity.