

PO Box 19  
Churchill  
3842



# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## *Newsletter – September 2023*

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

Welcome to this month's newsletter.

### August Activity Report

For the activity we had Matt, Ken, Tamara, Beryl, Caitlin, Anita, Rose, Mike, Cathy, Graeme and Darren. We had an apology from Gordon. The group met in the picnic area to discuss what had happened since the AGM. Gordon had sent in a President's report after the meeting and Ken spoke to Ranger Gabby and she also gave us a Ranger's Report. Both make interesting reading and can be found later in this newsletter.

A sub-committee of Caitlin, Anita Jay and Ken has been created to investigate the possible printing of a book about the birds of Morwell National Park. They will look at issues like costing, funding, numbers of books to print, who the book will be targeted to, sourcing quality photos of local birds and layout ideas.

Matt along with Ranger Gabby took a group from Federation University on a weed survey. Ranger Gabby is still trying to get the bridges replaced but there is still no response from Parks Victoria. She is investigating a ministerial submission to see whether that will yield some bridge replacements.

The Australian Conservation Foundation are conducting a platypus survey during September. People are encouraged to find a quiet spot and try to find platypuses. Sighting can be recorded on the weblink:

<https://www.acf.org.au/platy-project-signup?fbclid=IwAR2sYVbCUIqEquUIi5ir6MguOE2DGKPPc3hknkdwjZc8r3CXpLn9aH3dX-xY>

In the past platypus were regularly sighted in Billy's Creek. Perhaps people could find a quiet spot around Billy's Creek and record their platypus sightings.

Anita left after the morning meeting while everybody else collected their gear and entered vehicles for a drive around to Brewster Road. With carpooling three vehicles were needed. The hedge trimmer, brush cutter and chainsaw were collected on route. We needed to enter via Brewster Road since the track in from Stringybark Track was too wet and slippery.

Starting from the top of the hill and group worked down Silvertop Hill Track widening the track so that vehicles can safely travel down it. When we reached the bottom of hill, we turned to find that Muttonwood Tracks was totally overgrown. After the bushfire it was good to see healthy undergrowth regrowth. Silvertop Hill before the bushfire was sparsely vegetated, now has a good tree cover and healthy understory. It demonstrates that fire is an important part of bush improvement.

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**President:** Ken Harris

**Vice-President:** Caitlin Punshon

**Secretary & Public Officer:** Beryl Nelson

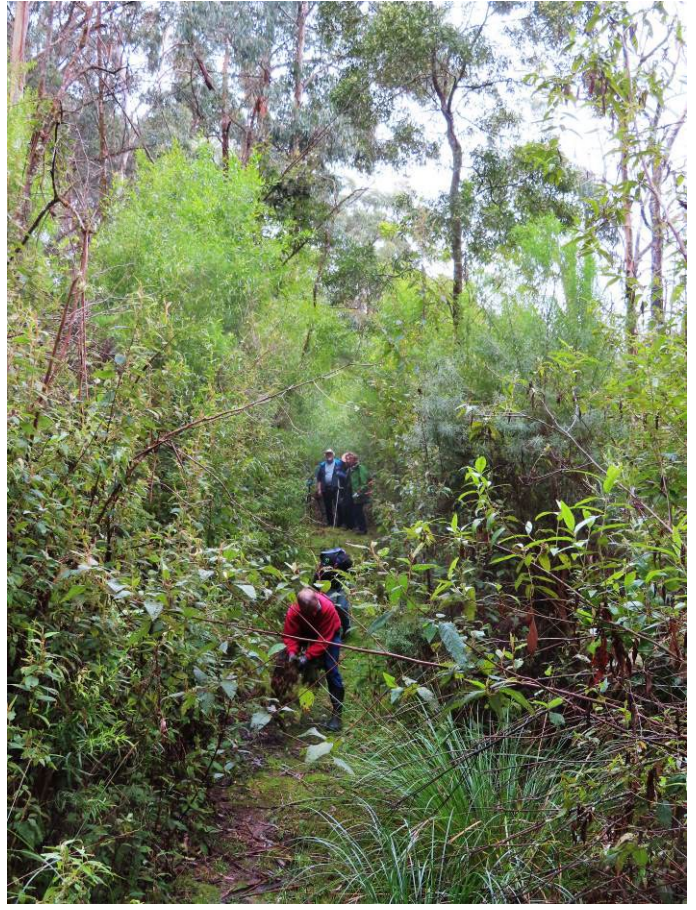
**Treasurer:** Mike Beamish

**Publicity:** Tamara Leitch

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

**Other members:** Melina Bath, Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Graeme Busch, Matt & Kerry Campbell, Joelle Champert, Wendy Davies, Gordon Duncan, Jay Duncan, Hayley Mildenhall, Rose Mildenhall, Anjali Pal, Anita Pither, Grant Pengelly, Wayne Pengelly, Chris Sikkema, Joan Sikkema, David Stickney, Wendy Steenbergen & Mike Williams.





When we turned in Muttonwood Track we needed to remake the track across the hill. Hand pulling of seedlings, removal of fallen branches and trimming of overhanging limbs was required to make the track. Some larger fallen branches required the use of the chainsaw to remove these from the track.



The group worked across the hill and got to the group of Muttonwood trees (the reason behind the naming of Muttonwood Track) to find several large trees down. Some of the smaller limbs were removed but some larger trees still block the track. At this point the chainsaw ran out of fuel, so lunch was called. We had almost reached the corner near the farm dam. A lot of chain saw work will be required to continue the track to the fence line near the farm. Much work will need to be done to continue this track.

The walk back to the beginning of the track was a lot easier than the trek in. At the beginning of the track the group found a spot to sit and share over lunch. With little fuel left for the chain saw the group decided



to finish after lunch and return at another activity to continue the track.



Muttonwood Track - before



Muttonwood Track - after

While working on Muttonwood Track, Cathy was busy collecting photos of orchids, insects and fungi located during the trek. The descriptions are quick identifications by Mike. This shows that if you look carefully there are many treasures to be found in all parts of the Park.



Maroonhood Orchid



Tiger Moth (*Ardices*)





Earthworm



Common Centipede (*Cormocephalus esulcatus*)



Cardiothorax Beetle



Wine Glass Fungus (*Podoscypha petalodes*)



Rainbow Bracket/Turkeytails (*Trametes versicolor*)

### **September Activity**

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

The group will meet in the Junction Road car park to complete track maintenance (likely to be a continuation of Muttonwood Track). You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.

**Friends of Morwell National Park**

**Annual General Meeting held Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

**Annual General Meeting declared open at 1.45pm**

**Attendance: Mike & Cathy Beamish, Rose Mildenhall, Jay Duncan, Darren Hodgson, Anita Pither, Caitlin Punshon, Beryl Nelson, Ken Harris.**

**Apologies: Graham Busch, Gordon Duncan, Matt Campbell, Tamara Leitch.**

**Previous AGM minutes held on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2022 were read and accepted as a true account.**

**Moved – Joelle Champert    Seconded – Ken Harris**

**The President’s Report wasn’t available at the meeting – but was provided later. It is attached below.**

**The Rangers’ Report wasn’t available at the meeting – but was provided later. It is attached below.**

**Treasurer’s Report was read & accepted                      Moved – Mike Beamish    Seconded – Jay Duncan**

**The Treasurer reported that we have 19 financial members for 2021-22.**

**Motion was Moved by Beryl Nelson that Incorporation fees (\$63.60) 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 Mike Beamish) - passed unanimously.**

**Election of Office Bearers: -**

<b>President – Ken Harris</b>	<b>Moved – Cathy Beamish</b>	<b>Seconded – Caitlin Punshon</b>
<b>Vice President – Caitlin Punshon</b>	<b>Moved – Jay Duncan</b>	<b>Seconded – Ken Harris</b>
<b>Secretary/Public Officer – Beryl Nelson</b>	<b>Moved – Caitlin Punshon</b>	<b>Seconded – Anita Pither</b>
<b>Treasurer – Mike Beamish</b>	<b>Moved – Beryl Nelson</b>	<b>Seconded – Anita Pither</b>
<b>Newsletter – Darren Hodgson</b>	<b>Moved - Caitlin Punshon</b>	<b>Seconded – Anita Pither</b>
<b>Publicity – Tamara Leitch</b>	<b>Moved – Caitlin Punshon</b>	<b>Seconded – Cathy Beamish</b>
<b>Committee Member – Matt Campbell</b>	<b>Moved – Beryl Nelson</b>	<b>Seconded – Ken Harris</b>

**Annual General Meeting declared closed at 2.15 pm**

## **President's Report 06/08/2023**

In my President's Report last year I reflected on the fact that Morwell National Park was still recovering from the June 2021 severe storm. At that time the most crucial work that needed to be done was the repair/replacement of the Stringybark Track bridge, the three bridges on Billy's Creek and Kerry Rd car park picnic area. Twelve months later, I'm extremely disappointed to say that we're still waiting. The lack of progress has probably been the most talked about point at our monthly meetings and it's given rise to the feeling that Morwell National Park is being neglected. On the positive side it was pleasing to welcome Melina Bath and Michael Williams as new members to the friends' group, with Michael already being an active participant in our monthly activities.

Now for the year in review. In August we finished the nest box survey which we started in July with a total of 42 Sugar gliders and 1 Ringtail observed during the surveys. We also undertook a number of nest box repairs. In September we continued with the nest box repairs as well as undertaking seed spreading in the upper parts of the Billy's Creek section of the park.

In October we had undertaken our annual Orchid walk and Koala survey. It had been a cold start to Spring so although we did observe a good number of orchids, many were not in bloom and somewhere yet to bud. Even with our eyes fixed on ground level we did observe 5 koalas in the morning. When we did undertake the koala survey it was almost as if they were waving at us from the trees, we couldn't help but see them. The total for the day, including the morning sightings, was 18 koalas.

The Butterfly Orchid survey was split over the months of November and December with good numbers being found in November but the plots which were surveyed December showed a decline due to the aftereffects of the storm. Seed collecting was also undertaken in both months, but the late spring was clearly evident in the lack of seed available. One highlight in November was the awarding of Pride in Workmanship awards to Matt, Graeme and Ken by the Morwell Rotary Club who also kindly donated \$300 to the friends group. After the survey and seed collecting was done in December we wandered up to Matt's place for our Christmas BBQ. Thanks to Matt for providing his verandah, and the sun, and to Cathy for the catering.

The summer nest box survey was undertaken in January, and it was clear that some of the occupants didn't appreciate being surveyed. Overall numbers were good with 40 Sugar Gliders, 1 Ringtail and 1 Agile Antechinus observed. In February we resumed the nest box repairs and we've now repaired/replaced a good number of boxes in the last two years. Seed collecting was also continued in January and February, but it was sparse so some enthusiastic weed eradication along the bottom section of Billy's Creek was undertaken instead.

The annual moth survey and spotlight walk in March is always the highlight of the year and this year didn't disappoint. A total of 80 moth species were recorded on Mike and Cathy's sheet and 70 moth species on Matt and Ken's with 7 being new recordings for the park. Once dark the spotlight walk commenced with some very good sightings for the evening.

The planned maintenance activities for April were washed out and were almost washed out again in May although we did manage to clear a couple of fallen trees along Foster's Gully. In June we managed a full circuit of Foster's Gully with more tree clearing and some slashing being done. In July we headed out to Stringybark but without vehicle access only some slashing and pruning could be done.

In closing I want to like to thank everyone's assistance during the last 12 months, in particular the committee and Matt. As I've already indicated I won't be continuing as President so I'd to finish by saying it's been an honour to be in the role and I look forward to seeing everyone a little later in the year.

Gordon Duncan

## **Ranger Report:**

I would like to start by saying a huge thank you to the Friends of Morwell National Park and the enormous amount of work you do monitoring, maintaining, and caring for the park and its biodiversity. It is greatly appreciated and could not be achieved without your knowledge, passion, and effort.

Across the year of 2022-23, there has been several notable activities undertaken in conjunction with Ranger staff. This has included education activities, as well as track management and signage projects. Items of significance include:

- Students from Traralgon College and Warragul Specialist School visited the park on multiple occasions to assist with a range of tasks, including racking, painting and gravel work at Billy's Creek Carpark and Fosters Gully.
- Parks Victoria staff worked with the Latrobe City Council and the Department of Transport to improve road signage leading the Park.
- New signs were added to Stringybark and Zigzag Track, with assistance from the South Gippsland Fire Team.
- The fencing around the Kerry Road Carpark was repaired and repainted.
- The 'Good Neighbour' Fox Control and Weed Control program were completed for the second year. There were approximately 37 fox bait takes, with wildlife cameras installed to ensure no off-target damage. Multiple invasive plants were also treated, such as blackberries, ivy, thistle and ragwort.
- Contractors were employed to complete slashing along the Grand Strzelecki Track and the bottom of Blue Gum Hill. Local Ranger, Mark Connor, also assisted by mowing Clematis Track.
- Several Junior Ranger activities were delivered in the park, with assistance from Matt Campbell. This included 'minibeast' water monitoring and a ClimateWatch Walk.
- Gabby and Matt led an excursion for students studying a Bachelor of Environmental and Conservation Science. The students visited Billy's Creek to learn about pest plant and animal species and management challenges.







## Friends of Morwell National Park

**General Meeting held 6<sup>th</sup> August 2023**  
**General Meeting declared open at 2.20pm**

**Attendance: Mike & Cathy Beamish, Rose Mildenhall, Jay Duncan, Darren Hodgson, Anita Pither, Caitlin Punshon, Beryl Nelson, Ken Harris.**

**Apologies: Graham Busch, Gordon Duncan, Matt Campbell, Tamara Leitch.**

**Minutes of previous meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> August were read and accepted as a true account.**

Moved – **Beryl Nelson**      Seconded – **Darren Hodgson.**

### Business arising from Previous Meeting: -

No discussion arose out of the previous meeting.

### Inwards Correspondence: -

1 <sup>st</sup> July	Email from Parks Victoria regarding WWC requirements from 1 <sup>st</sup> July.
6 <sup>th</sup> July	Email from Consumer Affairs Victoria regarding Annual Statement Notification.
14 <sup>th</sup> July	Email from PV regarding WCC requirements for volunteers.
14 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Email from CAV confirming Annual Statement had been received.
23 <sup>rd</sup> Aug	Email from Parks Victoria congratulating Round 3 recipients of Volunteering Innovation Fund.
24 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Email from Matt Campbell with a summary of Nest Box results for July/Aug.
29 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Email from PV that the final round of Volunteering Innovation Fund.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sept	Email from Martin Cameron who is standing as a candidate for Morwell in Victorian election on 25 <sup>th</sup> November.
7 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Email from Fern Cadman (Campaigns, Policy and Parliamentary Advisor) about the need for a Zero Extinction Fund.
18 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Email from Jay Duncan regarding potential seeding sites for Sunday's activity.
21 <sup>st</sup> Sept	Email from Parks Victoria stating that Volunteering Innovation Fund was closing soon.
26 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Email from Parks Victoria regarding the closing extension date of Volunteering Innovation Fund.
30 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Quarterly Conservation Newsletter.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Oct	Annual Community Briefing, Hazelwood Health Study 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2pm.
11 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Email from Parks Victoria with Volunteering Innovation Update Oct 2022.
22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	Email from Melina Bath MP regarding membership to the Friends Group.
22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	Letter from CBA Bank regarding the signatory details, need to be updated.
6 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Email from Matt Campbell regarding members that haven't uploaded WWC card.
28 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Email from Fiona Pfeil (Gippsland TAFE) regarding the possibility of Diploma Certificate course students, undertaking various field activities in the Park.
16 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Conservation Matters quarterly newsletter December 2022.
25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Email from Parks Victoria thanking the Friends groups for all our achievements and effort.
6 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Email from Matt Campbell regarding a motion at Latrobe City Council Meeting, on a proposed wildlife shelter – asking for any members that can attend.
26 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Email from Mike Matthyssen who wants to be involved in Friends Group.
4 <sup>th</sup> May	Email from PV related to 30 successful recipients of Volunteering Innovation Fund (Round 4)
9 <sup>th</sup> May	Email from PV regarding celebration of Volunteering and Events.
15 <sup>th</sup> May	Email from PV celebrating National Volunteer Week.
29 June	Conservation Matters Network.

## **Outwards Correspondence :-**

16<sup>th</sup> Sept Email from Martin Cameron (Candidate for Morwell) regarding a time for a meeting.  
22<sup>nd</sup> Oct Email to Melina Bath MP with attached receipt for membership FMNP.  
1<sup>st</sup> Mar Email to Mike Mattysen about next activity in March.

## **General Business –**

Discussion among members centered around how FMNP, can get Parks Victoria more involved in MNP which is classified a Category 3 Park. One suggestion was put forward was about tracking numbers of people attending the Park via Photo Post in which visitors could upload experiences to Instagram or a people counter. Another suggestion as to use a QR code placed at Park entrances to provide park information. We have no Park information boards at Kerry Road (it was removed by Parks a few years ago and there is no timeline for its replacement) or Junction Road where the only information is about the Grand Strzelecki Track which is closed outside of the park (but no information to indicate is on the board). It has been many years since the pamphlet box at the Junction Road entrance has had any pamphlets about the park.

Discussion was held about using other social medias like Instagram to engage more of the public with Morwell National Park.

Members queried the absence of a Ranger's Report. It has been many years since we have had a Ranger's Report. We have requested a report in the past, but they never came. We stopped asking. It was decided that the Friends Group would ask Parks Victoria, for a report from MNP Ranger. This was provided by Ranger Gabby.

Jay Duncan informed the meeting that the seed collecting permit has expired, and our seed broadcasting exercise into dead blackberry bushes failed because it didn't rain after the seed was distributed. This will need to be factored into upcoming activities and if want to collect more seed we will need the ranger to remake the application which was made three years ago. Parks Victoria should have the previous application on file.

Discussion was held about some different activities that could be included into next years calendar. We have public interest and many people from the public join us when we have the koala count, nesting box survey and orchid walk. There are many people interested in birds and the opportunities to see them, so some bird walks should be added to calendar. Similarly, a fungi and lichen walk should be added.

People seek out bird books showing birds local to an area. There are some good bird books for other areas, but none for this area. We have had good success with our other FMNP publications, the suggestion was put forward we should investigate creating a book of the birds of Morwell National Park. Ken has records of 120-130 bird sighting within the park over the years. A small group will look into the publication of a small book (A5) either financed by FNMP or using funding coming from other interested parties.

**Meeting declared closed at 3.50 6<sup>th</sup> August 2023.**



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# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## Calendar 2024

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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 21	Nesting box survey	Junction Rd, 10.00am
February 18	BYO Picnic & Spot light walk & Moth survey	Junction Rd, 6.30pm
March 17	Nesting box repairs	Junction Rd, 10.00am
April 21	Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
May 19	Fungi & Lichen walk & Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
June 16	Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
July 21	Track Maintenance	Junction Rd, 10.00am
August 4	AGM	Kerry Road, 1.30pm
August 18	Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
September 15	Bird walk	Kerry Road, 9.00am
October 20	Orchid Walk Koala Count	Kerry Road, 10.00am & Kerry Road, 1.30pm
November 17	Orchid Survey & Bird walk	Kerry Road, 10.00am
December 15	Track Maintenance Christmas Function	Kerry Road, 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.