



Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

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NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 1995

NOVEMBER ACTIVITY

The last Friends monthly activity was held on 19 November 1995. Several Friends assisted with the poisoning of willow trees along Billys Creek. The willow trees which were poisoned last autumn were observed to be in decline but all possessed some leaf growth. Most of the willows poisoned were Crack Willow *Salix alba* and the remainder were Pussy Willow *Salix cinerea*. Some of the larger Crack Willows required up to forty holes to be drilled for sufficient application of Round-up. The successful poisoning of the willows aims to remove introduced plants from the Park and will provide the opportunity to regenerate the creekside with indigenous riparian flora.

PRISONER ASSISTANCE

Ranger Rob Howell recently was assisted by ten prisoners (from the Morwell River Prison) for three weeks. The prisoners were engaged in maintenance and development of the Park. Using back -sprays, the prisoners sprayed thistles and ragwort. Maintenance work was undertaken along the walking tracks. A new walking track, approximately 1 kilometre in length was constructed at the southern end of the Fosters Gully section. One footbridge was built over a gully along this walk and another footbridge is under construction.

FLOODING

The floods approximately three weeks ago resulted in Billys Creek rising to the same height as the floods two years ago. Ranger Rob Howell commented, despite the extent of flooding minimal damage was caused (in contrast to the last major flooding).

PLATYPUS BURROWS

After the recent floods, a prisoner (from the Morwell River Prison) brought to Rob Howell's attention two freshly dug platypus burrows in the banks of Billys Creek. Individual platypuses dig several burrows each about six metres long. Platypuses construct the entrance to their burrows above the water-line. The entrance is tight fitting and arch-shaped. As platypuses are nocturnal, any sightings of these unique Australian mammals are likely to be at night.

SEED PROPAGATION

The native seeds (of all species) sown by the Friends in the Propagation Centre have germinated successfully. It is intended the Friends will plant these seedlings in the Billys Creek section in autumn and winter 1996.

P.T.O.

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NEW SPECIES

Ken Harris reports the finding of a previously unknown native plant for Morwell National Park. The species was first found just off the Zig-Zig Track (at the top end) on 29 July 1995. A subsequent visit revealed several other plants of the same species including ones in flowers. The specimen was identified by Ken Harris as the Tall Rice Flower *Pimelea ligustrina*. The shrub has long stems up to 1.5 metres in length and has a dense cluster of white flowers.

Rob de Souza-Daw reports the finding of a new species of beetle for the Park. The beetle was found dead by Rob in early 1995 and was subsequently identified by Catriona McPhee, an entomologist at the Museum of Victoria as the Banksia longicorn *Paroplites australis* (Erichson). The species is in the sub-family Prioninae in Cerambycidae. This family are the longicorn beetles. These beetles are recognized by their conspicuous long antennae. Their larvae are off-white wood boring grubs with large thoracic segments. The beetle found was dark brown, larger and wider than most cerambycid beetles.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Unfinancial members are requested to pay outstanding subscriptions to the Treasurer.

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| Family | \$ 15.00 |
| Individual | \$ 10.00 |

Any unfinancial member not intending to renew their subscription, please tender your resignation from the Friends.

DECEMBER ACTIVITY

3pm SATURDAY 16 DECEMBER 1995

(Note Saturday and the times).

Propagation Centre for the potting-up of seedlings into tubes. As many Friends as possible are required.

Followed by 7pm Friends barbecue at the Fosters Gully Carpark.

BRING YOUR OWN FOOD AND DRINKS.

Followed by 9pm Spotlight walk along the Fosters Gully Track. Ranger Rob Howell will lead the hour long spotlight walk.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR
