

PO Box 19
Churchill
3842



Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – September 1999

President:
5664-8211

A0016319X

August '99 Activity Report – Tree Planting at Billys Creek – Wendy Steenbergen

What a great day for planting trees. A bit of rain, then sun, then more rain. But it did not deter our intrepid bunch of dedicated workers. It was a delight to see so many new faces who came along to help. I hope we didn't work them too hard, and maybe they will come along again. Thanks to Cathy and Michael who have decided to become members. We had a good team going, some folding the guards, some clearing the ground and some planting trees. We planted 485 trees – tea tree, musk daisy bush, native hemp bush, manna gums and swamp gums, blackwoods and silverwattles. Thanks to Rob and Les who pre-folded a lot of the guards, so that our first couple of hours planting went very quickly. We finished the day by running out of stakes and jute mats. It was very satisfying to walk back to the main entrance through the previous plantings. Thanks again to Danny for putting the articles in the local papers. It is a great reminder to the locals that we are still actively involved in the Park.

Membership Reminder

For those who haven't renewed their memberships, memberships for 1999/2000 are now due. Please forward single membership of \$10.00, or Family membership of \$15.00 to The Treasurer, Friends of Morwell National Park, PO Box 19, Churchill 3842. Cheques are to be made payable to 'Friends of Morwell National Park'.

Newsletter Reviews

We have received newsletters from **Coolart Wetlands and Homestead Friends**.

Coolart Friends are celebrating their 20th Anniversary this September and have included a list of various highlights.

In other areas they are having Spinning Demonstrations on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 10.30am – 2.30pm. There will be an art exhibition from 4th Sept. until 2nd Oct. titled 'Wildlife – a Fresh Look' featuring various artists. And you can start your Christmas planning with Christmas in the Kitchen, a series of various events.

If you're looking for a bite to eat, Devonshire teas will be served resuming in September and Coolart Ranger, Conrad Annual is currently touring Africa!

Recycling

If you have aluminium cans that we can collect for recycling and therefore fundraising, they can be dropped off at Wendy Steenbergen's at 118 Manning Drive, Churchill. Your efforts would be really appreciated.



September Activity

This month we will be the last of the tree plantings for the year and we will be planting in Billy' Creek. Don't forget to bring along your gumboots, a raincoat, your lunch, a drink and gloves. Everyone is welcome. We will be meeting at Junction Road for a 10.00am start. We really appreciate as much or as little time as you can afford, as many hands make light work. Please contact Ed on 5664 8211 if you would like more information. See you there!

A Morning in Fosters Gully - Ken Harris

I spent this morning extending my plant survey in Fosters Gully and thought the following observations may be of interest.

The swamp wallaby which frequents the picnic area was feeding near the toilets and as she reached forward to graze, the joey in her pouch was grazing as well. the joey then emerged and looked very lively dancing around its' mother before diving back into the pouch.

The usual Lewin honeyeater was in the picnic area, but as I started along the walk, it or another Lewin honeyeater appeared beside me, and to my surprise landed on my shoulders. I stayed very still, wondering whether it was after my hair for a nest, but it flew off without pulling on my hair.

The Lyrebirds were noisy and I had a good view of two, one female or young male and one adult male.

Every year in the spring, mountain duck are surprise visitors to Fosters Gully and they were there in force today. At least six of them were flying up and down over the forest, often landing in the tops of the tallest mountain grey gums. They usually nest in holes high in mature trees and I am sure they must regularly nest in the Park, although I have no proof of that.

I saw quite a few orchids. The most conspicuous are the Maroon-hoods with several patches in flower. I also found a few late flowers on the Veined-helmet orchids and pone small patch of Nodding-greenhoods. The Mayfly orchids at the back corner of the picnic area are in bud, while the Mosquito orchid flowers are all over, although the leaves are still visible. Wax-lips, Pink fingers and a Helmet orchid are showing leaves, but are still a long way short of flowering.

National Treefest 1999 "Finding Common Ground"

24-26 September 1999, Leongatha

This is a celebration of trees promoting multiple value trees and land management-production, protection, conservation, aesthetics.

Contact Jacqui Granger for more info. On 5143 0005

REMINDER

If you would like to have anything included, please have it to me by 1st October 1999. You can send contributions, letters and comments to Helen Steenbergen at PO Box 19, Churchill, 3842.

To: Treasurer, Friends of Morwell National Park, PO box 19 Churchill, 3842

Please find Enclosed amount of \$_____ (\$10 single, \$15 family) being for membership.

Name:.....Telephone:.....

Address:.....

Signed:.....Date:.....

Trip to the Once Great Snowy River

Lee Theissling

A few weeks ago my year 12 geography class took a trip to the Orbost area of the Snowy River for CAT2. The purpose of the trip was to investigate the issue of the Snowy River and the effect of the Snowy Mountain scheme on the area.

When the Snowy Mountain Scheme was completed in 1949 it consisted of seven dams, numerous power stations and hundreds of kilometers of tunnels and aqueducts to transport the collected water to the Murray River system. But there was a catch, the water that the farmers received down stream on the Snowy was reduced to only 1% of what had come down the river before. The rest was used for electricity and irrigation on the Murray. Subsequently the Snowy has been dying since then and is running out of time to reverse the damage. Many people have been affected by the 1% flow through the dam all down the river. The farmers are losing the land to solidity in their irrigation water from the river and to flooding problems. The river itself is almost dead. Before the scheme, fish stokes, native plants, bird life and even large amounts of platypus were all abundant up the 500-kilometer river. But today little remains of the flora and fauna of the river, except large amounts of weeds and foreign invaders. Because of the shallow depth of the river, the water has risen in temperature which is unsuitable for the native fish to breed in and so now the fish left in the river are dying of old age. Every year salt water from the sea moves evermore inland because of the slow water flows. With the dying of the fish, tourism has dropped off dramatically causing the towns along the Snowy who rely on the tourist dollar, to lose much of their incomes and in a lot of cases many have shut up shop.

The Snowy River Alliance, which is made up of many smaller "Save the Snowy Groups" has been made into one alliance and political force who are trying to get the 1% flow increased to 28-30%. This is the amount need to sustain the river and the users along the river.

Cont. next column

Rangers Report

Rob Howell

75 Students from the Catholic Regional College have been planting in the Park over five days. They managed to plant 1566 trees during this period and have helped tremendously in the revegetation of areas of the Park. Because they were able to plant so many trees, there are now only just enough left for the last activity.

The plantings were carried out along the proposed entrance road from Braniff's Road, along several sites on the west side of Billy Creek and along the steep bank, near the junction of Billy Creek and Tom Thumb Creek.

Thank you to all of the students involved.

Trip to the Once Great Snowy River cont.

The State Government has said that the most they will receive is 15%, but that is still not enough. One of the State and Federal Government's main arguments is that if the water through the dam is decreased, they'll lose money, but according to the Snowy River Alliance, the large amount of water the Murray receives is too much and the solidity on the Murray is much worse than the solidity due to it. The SRA says if 28-30% of what the Murray receives, is let through the dam, then much of the Murray's problems will be helped also along with solving the Snowy's problems.

Also there is the issue of privatization of the Snowy Mountains scheme next year that may further complicate the problem. The SRA says it's vital that the legislation on the flow through the dam should be changed prior to privatization.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this Newsletter. Due to space restrictions we were not able to include all articles. They will however be included in subsequent Newsletters.

Helen Steenbergen