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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter June 2002

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaean.net>

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Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter.

Park News and Correspondence

You should now be able to access the newsletter on the website. I have been forwarding the newsletter electronically to Ken, who has been organising the transfer. This month I shall be sending Ken some of the most recent historical newsletters, so you should see these appear on the website as they are processed.

Latrobe City Council has forwarded to us the opportunity to apply for some extra grant monies. Firstly, an application form was received for a Government (Natural Heritage Trust, Envirofund) grant of up to \$30,000. We thought this an excellent opportunity to obtain funding for the proposed vehicular bridge across Billy Creek from the Braniff's Road entrance. Rob will endeavour to meet application requirements by the deadline. Secondly, the Latrobe City Environment Unit has invited submissions for the removal of feral pines from roadsides, raising the possibility of ridding ourselves of the pines on the Jumbuk Road boundary.

Our Secretary, Jane, has been doing a sterling job getting our correspondence under control. Jane has written an excellent reply as feedback to the Latrobe City Ecologically Sustainable Development and Biodiversity & Native Vegetation Draft documents (of which Ed Steenbergen is a member of the Working Groups, under his Jeeralang Landcare Group hat).

Jane has also forwarded to me the Minutes of our Committee Meeting on May 2, 2002. Anyone who wants a gripping read, let me know.

Rob answered an inquiry from the Berwick Bushwalking Club for information and assistance in planning a walk in Morwell National Park, with the appropriate track notes and information sheets forwarded to the Club.

Meredith Roads, a student from Monash University doing a study on places of outdoor recreation, requested information and personal recollections of the Friends Group's relationship with the Park. Wendy has provided a suitable response.

Other correspondence includes;

- An update from the Strzelecki Working Group on proposals for an enlarged reserve system in the Strzelecki Ranges.
- The latest edition of Canopy, the Parks Victoria magazine.
- The latest edition (No.19, March 2002) of Under Control magazine.

June Activity

Our scheduled activity for Sunday, June 16, is our first tree planting exercise for the year. We will meet at the Junction Road carpark at 10.00am with the aim of filling in the gaps left from willow removal and burning, changes to the revegetation plan, low success rates from last year and/or poor marksmanship in the recent past. As always, lunch, sturdy water-resistant footwear, suitable clothing and personal items should be brought along.

Tree Guard Triumphs

Cathy almost didn't make it! After several days of wet, windy, woeful weather, she presumed Sunday, May 19, would throw up more of the same. But, at departure time the heavens had not yet opened, so with ample cajoling, threats and physical and mental abuse, I managed to get them all into the truck and we were on our way. As usual we were the last to front up, but there were a few that didn't. Ray claimed a bad back, which no doubt was true (how could I doubt her, she is my mother-in-law!), but Denis and Jane had apologised that they were in Melbourne attending the Rally for the Forests. Good on them, but that was on Saturday, so I suspect a nice, warm sleep-in was more likely. Even Wendy voiced amazement that we didn't have to cancel the activity due to bad weather for the first time in Friends history.

After organising our plan of attack, we were into it, off up the track to the big bend under the powerlines, where we quickly got into the swing of things. Firstly, we admired a colony of Imperial White Butterfly cocoons suspended at head height in their webbing nest, in the midst of the remains of their primary food plant, a small clump of Mistletoe. They had eaten every vestige of green foliage from the plant to the point where the last of them had starved (or frozen?) before reaching cocoon stage. Still, there must have been two dozen black and orange cocoons, at least. Then the work started in earnest. Wendy, Cathy and Nicole gathered guards nearby, Ken and Danny jumped the creek and started relaying them back across to us via Zack and Joe, Reg wandered around knocking out stakes wherever necessary, and Rob spent his time sorting out the good guards from the bad and cutting new stake holes. I started off with Rob, then also jumped the creek and gathered guards. Hilma turned up about then and pitched in wherever he was needed.

Removing the guards from some of last years planting proved difficult, particularly those planted in the ash beds of the willow piles, as these trees were double the size of the others. On the other hand, it was disappointing to see the number of dead and damaged trees on the flat, where spray drift from some incompatible herbicides had come in contact with foliage. Still, at least the weeds weren't well, either.

The large trailer quickly filled as we worked our way up the creek, but some neat stacking by Nicole and Rob kept it under control. We had lost Reg by lunchtime, as he had worked his way well ahead of the rest of the crew. A quick bite and a hot cuppa revived our enthusiasm, so we dived back into the fray, filled up the big trailer completely and started on the small trailer. Working on the steep, slippery banks was tricky, but we stuck with it and reached the carpark paddock just in time to fill the second trailer. I think we could have squeezed more on if we had tried a bit harder! A leisurely drive back to Junction Road saw us making a quick exit, as the weather made good on it's threats and rained all the way home.