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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – May 2005

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

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Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter and welcome also to our prospective new members, Beryl Nelson of Newborough and Robyn Zink of Jeeralang Junction. I write prospective because I don't yet know if all the formalities are complete, but nevertheless, glad to have you as part of the Friends.

Park News

All the smoke and flame around about the middle of April, a week before our last activity, was a planned fuel reduction burn on parts of Stringybark Ridge. Rob informs us that the burn was very successful and may well provide an excellent display of local wildflowers during regeneration over the next couple of seasons.

A new boundary fence and some fire break work was achieved near Muttonwood Creek in the south-west corner of the Park, due to rural subdivision requirements off Brewster's Road.

New steps have been installed on the eastern side of the Foster's Gully footbridge, replacing the badly weathered and eroded originals. Their alignment has been altered as well, making them much more aesthetically pleasing. They are constructed of treated pine coated with a substance similar to cement mix, to both protect them from weathering and to seal in their toxic properties. Although treated timber will soon be unavailable on the market due to toxicity problems, suitable alternatives are not yet available. The steps on the western side of the footbridge are also due for replacement when finance and a suitable design allow.

More European Wasp nests have been found and treated within the Park, five in the Billy Creek section and one in Foster's Gully. Plenty of wasps were observed during the April activity, so there must still be other nests in the area, although not necessarily in the Park.

May Activity

Due to our success in finishing off our Tutsan removal sessions for the time being and since we changed our program last month to achieve this, our May activity will necessarily be our most favourite task of tree guard removal. Thus, we will meet at the Junction Road gate at 10am on Sunday, May 15. You will need to bring your own lunch and refreshments and wear clothing suitable for slogging through the shrubbery in search of those obscurely sited tree guards.

Weed Wars, Episode V

April Activity Report

The weather remained as gorgeous as it had been all autumn, despite all attempts by the DSE to douse us in fuel reduction smoke. On arrival at the Braniff's road gate, Reg was the only one on station, glad that we had shown up to prove that he was in the right place. Ken and Rob were not too long in putting in an appearance, followed by a new face in Beryl. Jane arrived with Aaron, with the information that we would have another new face with us shortly, and in due course, Robyn strolled up along the road. While waiting to see if anybody else would turn up, we all made ourselves acquainted and caught up on the latest Park news.

Time flies during interesting conversation and before we knew it we had been gasbagging for half an hour, so we got ourselves organised and drove in to the ford. Dividing up into three groups, Reg and Cathy began at the ford and re-covered the section of creek downstream checked by Reg and Danny a couple of months previously, before the sprayers had done their thing. The rest of us drove about a third of the way down towards Junction Road, where Beryl, Robyn and I worked back upstream towards Reg and Cathy, while Ken and Rob worked downstream. Jane and Aaron amused themselves at the ford for a while until they headed for home. We found a few Tutsan plants that showed no sign of being poisoned and a few others that had browned off tips, but new shoots on the lower parts of the stem, so we spent a bit of time intent on destruction. Even the odd little willow made an appearance and was promptly dispatched.

Displaying perfect timing for lunch, we met up with Reg and Cathy right next to the patch of introduced bulrush that Ken had asked me to look out for. No flowers that needed treatment, only a few stems sprouting from the stream bed. Back at the cars, we made ourselves comfortable and enjoyed our lunch and more conversation as Rob played with a little green spider, doing his best to spin a web between Rob's boots and my car. After lunch, we continued on using the morning's method, with Reg and Cathy working downstream from where Rob and Ken had exited, the rest of us driving down further, Rob and Ken working back upstream, while Robyn, Beryl and I worked downstream to the Junction Road bridge. Again, we found a few willows and a few suspect Tutsan that we removed, upset a few little trout by wading through their waterholes and braved a bit of scrub bashing to get around some deep spots. All in all, a fairly uneventful afternoon, very pleasant though, just strolling down the creek. It will be interesting to see how much germination of seed we get next spring, just from Tutsan berries washed into the creek by the floods in February, before the bulk of them were sprayed.



Payback

I've just got room for the little item at left, courtesy of Jane Sultana. I now feel fully avenged for the photo a couple of months back, where the rest of us were put to the sword, wearing a similar get-up. What goes around, comes around, no doubt again and again, and I'm sure this won't be the last of it. Come to think of it, Jane hasn't starred in one of these photos yet.....