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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – July 2006

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

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G'day all, welcome to the July newsletter. Cold, isn't it! While you were all labouring away clearing tracks last month, I was comfortably ensconced on a plane to Adelaide, looking forward to a 3 hour drive north into the wilds of South Australia, destination Hallett. Interesting country. Rolling hills just like home, except they're brown, not green, and there's hardly a tree to be seen anywhere. Sheep and kangaroos, saltbush and mulga. Ten inch rainfall zone. But it was still cold, minus 6 a couple of mornings. At least it warmed up a bit when the sun came out. So once again the newsletter has been written by others, I'm just putting it together. Here goes.....

Clearing of the Coprosma Track – Take Two

By Cathy Beamish

Sunday turned out to be cool but dry, which was a bonus considering the work we were to do. We were to tackle track reconstruction again, this time commencing at the base of Blue Gum hill and cutting a way through to the creek. As Rob was away on a well earned holiday, Craig was enlisted to help us out for the day. Ken, Reg, Denis and myself were the only starters for the day. Mike was on his way to SA as he had to work there for the week, so I suppose he had an excuse, and Wendy had family commitments on the other side of the state. As there were only five of us, we were all able to pile into the Parks 4WD to be transported to the base of Blue Gum hill. The only exciting thing we saw along the way was about a dozen kangaroos happily grazing on the grass. Once at the base of the hill, we piled out of the vehicle and collected the gear that we thought we would need. Craig gave us safety instructions before we took off. ie stay clear of him while he was using the chainsaw as a slasher, and be very careful with the scythes as they were extremely sharp (I heard that they were a bit blunt last month).

Ken started off along the track first as he was attaching red ribbon to the undergrowth to show which way he wanted the track to go. Craig followed him with the chainsaw, slashing away at the undergrowth as he went. Reg and Denis then followed with the scythes, clearing away more undergrowth, and I followed them with one of the over-sized hoes, wondering how effective I was actually going to be for the day. (Me and large gardening tools don't exactly get along!). I began by clearing away the large sticks and creeper type undergrowth. Craig came back after a while and went back to the truck to swap the chainsaw for a hoe. He said that the track required 'benching'. Being the bright female that I am, I had no idea what he was talking about! It turns out he meant flattening the track out to make it easier to walk along. After watching Craig for a while, I decided that I would give benching a go. It turned out easier than I thought it would be as the dirt was quite soft and easy to scrap away. I continued on from where Craig left off, and kept at it for an hour or so. Once I had finished the section I was on, I wandered along the track to check out the progress of the men. They had been working hard and had cleared away the undergrowth right up to the creek. They had also started benching at other places along the track. We decided it was time for lunch and headed back to the 4WD for a feed. After lunch the fella's did more benching. We were a bit short on tools as the handle had broken on one of the hoes, so I just followed the men along the track tramping down the ground as they levelled it off. Once we reached the creek, we had a break and a natter and stood around admiring our handy work. The track looked great. We crossed over the creek to check out how far Denis had got, and found that the track was slashed right up to the next creek crossing. We decided that it would take too long to complete this section, so we called it a day. Overall, we had a very productive day. Great progress was made on the track and it will make easy, but slightly muddy, access to the creek.

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM is pencilled in for Sunday, August 6, to begin at 1.30pm. Rob has once again kindly offered to host the event at his residence at 5 Bond Court, off Walker Parade in Churchill. Please contact our Secretary, Jane Sultana, if you have any items you wish to add to the agenda and please bring along all your ideas for the next twelve months. A plate of goodies to share for afternoon tea would be appreciated.

July Activity

We will be joining the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Fungi Group on their outing to Mt Worth, commencing at the Moonlight Creek picnic area at 10.30am on Sunday, July 16. If you don't want to undertake the long drive yourself, car pooling is an option. Let Rob or myself know and we will arrange something. Be self-contained for the day. The following information may be of interest.....

Why are Fungi Important?

Fungi play a vital role in the ecosystem as decomposers, as pathogens and as partners in mutualisms (symbioses) such as mycorrhizas. Without fungi, life on earth would be vastly different. Fungi are the main recyclers of dead plant material. Fungi exist in a wide range of different habitats. We have a particularly rich source in our wet forests, such as Mt Worth State Park.

The distribution of even the most well-known species of Australian fungi is poorly known. There are few published distribution maps. Current research in many areas, especially conservation, is hampered by lack of basic knowledge of our fungi. The study of Fungi is one of the areas of natural science where non-specialists can make a substantial contribution.

What is Fungimap?

Fungimap is a national organisation supported by the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. They are dedicated to the study and conservation of Australian fungi. Their main activity is mapping the distribution of 100 target species of Australian fungi using information sent in by volunteer recorders. More information, including the target species, can be found on their website: www.rbg.vic.gov.au/fungimap.

How to Record Distribution of Fungi

First learn to identify at least some of the target species from photos on the Fungimap web site or from the book, *Fungi Down Under*, by Pat Grey and Ed Grey. Obtain a copy of the Fungimap data sheet from their web site. Also have the relevant maps for your area or a GPS system to record the exact location of the fungi. Take photographs of the target species and send them, together with your completed data sheets, to Fungimap at Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

Subscriptions!!!

If you haven't already taken care of business, please take advantage of the cut-off slip below, otherwise you may be deleted from our member list.

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

Please find enclosed the amount of \$_____ (\$10 per person, \$15 per family/group) being for membership 2005/2006.

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

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