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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – February 2007

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

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G'day everyone, welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. As I write, the sky is starting to show a few patches of blue after a morning of nice, steady rain. It is still very humid, but a nice mild temperature that may become pretty sticky if the sun does break through. Hopefully, though, the showers are just taking a short break and will come in from the east once again. I bet East Gippsland has been getting a few cats and dogs. This morning I've been taking advantage of the cool and moist conditions and supplementing the rain with several loads of laundry water. Cathy has put through 3 full loads, which consists of roughly 12 buckets of water each, 6 for the wash and 6 more for the rinse. That equates to 36 buckets, or 360 litres, all of which I have the pleasure of carting out to various points around the garden. The joys of Stage 4 water restrictions! I did try to connect the hose up to the washing machine pump, but the machine had a hissy fit and refused to continue, so at this stage the buckets rule. I think the problem is that the machine is timing out before it is able to pump all the water out through the hose, correctly sees this as a fault and stops the process. A larger diameter hose may fix the problem, but I haven't got around to getting one to test the theory. In the meantime, the bucket brigade rules a couple of days a week.

Enough of my ramblings, on to items of more pertinence to the Morwell National Park.....

February Activity

On the calendar for Sunday, February 18 is the last (hopefully) of the latest round of weed removal sessions. We have the lowest section of Billy Creek to go to complete our current work along the length of the creek. We will meet at the Junction Road entrance to the Billy Creek section of the Park at 10am. As always you will need clothing and footwear suitable for warding off the pricklies and bities and the conditions on the day and your own lunch and refreshments.

Weed Wars, Episode XIV **January Activity Report**

Only five of us appeared at the Junction Road entrance at the appointed time. Ken was there early as he had overestimated the extra time he needed to collect the tools from the propagation shed, Cathy and I were next, with Wendy and Beryl not far behind us. Rob would not be with us for the day, as he was tied up with his duties concerning the fire-fighting in the alpine areas. Reg, Denis and Jane had sent apologies for their absences due to other obligations on the day.

The weather report for the day was a bit gloomy, with rain predicted: not good for poisoning weeds. At first the weather did look threatening, but lightened up before long, so we decided to continue with our plans. I drove the group up to the Braniff's Road ford, where we decided to split into two groups, so I promptly turned around and drove Ken, Wendy and Beryl back down the creek and left them to work upstream, while Cathy and I returned to the first footbridge and worked our way downstream. The work was typical; stretches of weed free streamside interspersed with the odd mature Tutsan, Teasel, Ragwort or thistle and the occasional patch of little Tutsan seedlings, mainly on the silt jetties exposed by the low water levels. We did see plenty of wildlife though, disturbing a couple of crayfish, one quite big, and an eel in the creek, and a couple of Southern Brown Tree-frogs in the streamside vegetation.

Cathy was just about to call lunch when the other group made a timely appearance around the next bend. A cup of tea and a few sandwiches put the munchies to bed while the birds (including a Restless Flycatcher, I think) performed their routines around us. After lunch, we decided to continue as one group and made good progress. Making my way back to the group after moving the car, a scaly steel-grey body caught my attention in the long grass. After carefully making sure that legs were present, I swooped onto a fit and healthy blue-tongue that was most offended by my actions. I carted him back for the group to have a look at, ignoring the hissing, wriggling and the gaping threat display that was all bluff.

A short while later, while the four of us were negotiating some rough country in the creek bed in our search for nasties, we noticed Ken up on the bank with his camera out. Although we couldn't see it from our position, apparently there was a wombat posing nicely for a photograph, at least photogenic enough to keep Ken interested. By this stage we were all just about done for the day and were keen to reach the car and our exit point from the creek. We were satisfied with the ground covered and the weeds we had sorted out (including a couple of small pussy willows), so made our way back to Junction Road and said our goodbyes. Our timing was excellent, as the weather was again looking threatening; we passed through a couple of showers on the way home and received a nice half-inch of rain that night. Hopefully, our poison had done its job by the time the rain arrived.