

PO Box
19
Churchill
3842



President:
5122 3137

Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – May 2007

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

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G'day everyone, welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. I hope everyone is getting used to being back on normal time, with the days getting shorter and cooler, although I've read we are still running several degrees warmer than the long term averages. I suppose they're correct since we have not needed to fire up the heater so far this year. I find it a nuisance to travel to work in the dark, put in a day's work, then find it dark again by the time I get home. All those little gardening jobs around the house just don't get done! The sooner I get back to my normal part-time routine the better (and full retirement would be better again!).

Again there is not much of interest happening around the Park to report. Ken, though, did report sighting two Lyrebirds scratching around in the clearing at the base of the Zig Zag Track and sent me a photo of one to prove it!



Friends of Morwell NP 21st Birthday

Don't forget we are due to run a tour of the Billy Creek section of the Park on Saturday, May 12, from 2pm at the Junction Road gate. Afterwards, we will gather at the Yinnar Pub to enjoy a meal, drinks and/or conversation with all the past and present members or other interested parties that care to join us.

May Activity

On Sunday, May 20, we are due to meet at the Junction Road gate at 10am, for the car shuttle to the work site. The activity is one of Wendy's favourites and Rob's most disliked, yes, you guessed it, tree guard removal. Assuming we won't get heaps of rain between now and then, we hope to scale the heights of the Lodge Track (perhaps from the Moran's Road gate) to tackle the old wire guards around the earlier plantings at the top of the hill. As always, wear clothing and footwear suitable for the environment and weather conditions on the day and bring your own lunch and refreshments.

Working on the Chain Gang, again April Activity Report

Another good turnout of workers greeted Cathy and I as we arrived at the appointed location at the appointed time. Rob, Ken, Wendy, Reg, Beryl and local Tebb Terrace resident Darren were all ready for action. A wallaby escorted us for quite a distance along Billy Creek as we drove towards the Braniff's Road ford, easily keeping pace with the vehicle regardless of the surrounding vegetation. Plenty of trout were obvious in the various pools we were able to overlook from vantage points along the track, as we travelled past the weir to the base of Blue Gum Hill.

A short walk along a magnificent track, courtesy of our efforts last month, soon brought us to the end of maintained section, where we organised ourselves into crews for the task at hand. A quick re-hash of the steps cut into the creek bank last month, to form a wider and less steep stairway, was the first job soon completed. On into the unknown. Again we were a well oiled machine. Ken forged onwards up the hill with some track markers to show us and future walkers the way, Darren commandeered the slasher and expertly cut back the offending nettles and fireweed, Beryl and Wendy cleared the cuttings out of the way and Reg and I hacked away at the rocks and the roots with rake hoe and mattock to flatten and grade the track. Cathy had a crook back so she spent most of the time admiring the scenery and our handiwork, occasionally acting as overseer. Rob brought up the distant rear, this time with a container of herbicide to spray the blackberries and any other plant that offended him.

Lunch came just in the nick of time for me (and no doubt others) to have a spell and cool off. I'd dispensed with the overalls this month, taking the risk of severe mosquito and nettle strike, but it was still hot and dusty work. My boots kept filling up with gravel with no trouser legs to deflect it away! We hadn't seen Ken for a while, he had briefly appeared to gather the axe to hack off a couple of tree branches that were obscuring the track markers, but hadn't been seen or heard since. We weren't waiting, though. Just like last month, we parked ourselves in the 'turning circle' at the base of Blue Gum Hill and admired the Lewin's Honeyeater pretending to be a Fantail and the Koala grazing in the gum tree overhead. Ken eventually appeared looking a bit weary from his exploits around the hills.

After filling the aching void, it was back to the chain gang. We had reached the steeper hillside section of the track which would require quite a bit of earthworks and grading, even steps cut in places. We resumed our working positions but progress was slow and the work tiring. To break up proceedings, Cathy found an interesting critter that was able to curl itself into a perfect sphere when it felt threatened. Cathy held onto it until Ken appeared after finishing his lunch. We thought it was some kind of slater or wood louse, but Ken thought it had too many legs per body segment and might be some sort of millipede. Whatever it was, Ken took these photos and also took the beastie home for



more research. Sending the details to the appropriate experts, he found out an Order and Family name in unpronounceable Latin, but the local varieties had not been formally described and named to species level. The short version is that it is probably a pill millipede with



populations known from the Strzelecki Ranges in the Gonyah Gonyah area. The experts are still working on it!

Eventually our energy ran out, particularly the poor bugger throwing the mattock around, me. I'm shouldn't complain too much though, as I'm sure others would have taken over if I'd asked (or had a nervy turn). Seriously, we all put in a great day's work, the track looks terrific, and hopefully it won't wash away in the next rain event. The only problem is that at our current rate of progress, it will be another ten years before we reach the top of the hill!