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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – October 2007

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

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G'day everyone, welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter.

October Activity

It is Koala Count time once again and this year's count is programmed for Sunday, October 21 at 1.30pm. In an attempt to encourage more participants from the local community, we did plan to hold a sausage sizzle before the count, but it seems we haven't had time to plan this appropriately, so we will proceed with the normal arrangements. We need as many members as possible to attend, so we can provide guidance to all the walking groups and cover as many of the routes as we can. Well done to whoever it was that organised the front page article in the Churchill News, if that doesn't get a few more attendees, nothing will.

After the Storm, Part 2 August Activity Report

Cathy and I had a few errands to run before the activity, which didn't take as long as expected, so when we arrived at the Junction Road gate at 9.30am, an empty car park was all we found. Our standby Ranger for the day, Craig, arrived a couple of minutes later, so instead of waiting for everyone else to appear, we hopped into his vehicle and went for a joy ride up Billys Creek to check out the condition of the track. More trees were down in the plantation area than last month, but apart from one small log that took a couple of minutes to carve up, the track was clear. Craig had been told we wouldn't get past the first creek crossing in his vehicle, which is a couple of inches lower than Rob's, but we could find no reason why not. We headed back to the gate to find Ken, Wendy, Reg, Darren and Beryl craning their necks as they watched a flock of Corellas circling overhead.

After the obligatory gossip, we divided ourselves between Craig's and my vehicle. The trip to the first crossing was uneventful, where we spent a bit of time clearing up a few small branches and examining the undermined footings of the nearby footbridge. Deciding we could handle the creek crossing safely, we continued up to the weir without any problems, although the tree hanging over the cutting below the weir was only just high enough to allow my vehicle to pass underneath. At the weir our path was blocked by a substantial tree trunk, perhaps 18 inches diameter, over the track, that Rob wasn't keen on tackling last month, but Craig was game to have a go, so we removed this obstacle before too long. Craig did all of the chainsaw work, of course, and ended up looking like a snowman, covered in sawdust, for his troubles. The next tree we didn't bother with as we could get around it ok, so left it for the heavy machinery. While shifting a few rocks out of the detour, we uncovered a cold McCoy's Skink trying to be as inconspicuous as possible. In the meantime, Reg managed to get Craig's vehicle bogged, and it took a bit of pushing from the brawniest of the crew to extricate him. As a result, we left the vehicles where they were and walked the rest of the way to the next worksite.

The next log was also fairly substantial and as an added problem, had buried itself a few inches into the track. Tackling it a piece at a time and judicious use of wedge and spade, we eventually managed to clear enough away to allow a vehicle through. This time we uncovered a large earthworm, which was deemed worthy of a photo by Ken, shown at right. It was subsequently identified as a common, introduced Grey Worm, *Aporrectodea caliginosa*. The route was now clear all the way to the Coprosma Track and by the time we had walked up and sorted out a few smaller branches, the hungry amongst us called for a lunch break. Craig wasn't a lunch break type person, so he continued working while the rest of us went back to the weir and put the picnic table through its paces.



After lunch, we wandered back up to near the first creek crossing on the Coprosma Track and continued our work. With an absolute mess of fallen trees and branches to contend with on the old track alignment, the decision was made to take a slight detour and avoid the bulk of the mess. With the removal of a minimum number of branches and a couple of unlucky ferns we successfully reached the crossing site. A couple of strategically located stepping stones were added to the crossing site in an attempt to avoid wet feet and we were on our way to the second crossing where a couple of sturdy logs had fallen to effectively bridge the creek, perhaps only for those with a good sense of balance. We cleaned up the track and constructed a new set of steps up the far bank to pretty much finish our work for the day. Before long we were back at the vehicles expecting Craig to get bogged again on the way out, but he negotiated the muddy patch with no problems. Cathy and I were first back to our truck and expected the others to soon follow, but there seemed to be something of great



interest holding them up and curiosity eventually won and Cathy wandered back to see what was up. Apparently it was a pseudoscorpion that had caught Ken's eye and admittedly, from the photo at left, it certainly is a strange looking beastie. At some time during the day, Ken had also taken a shot of a small beetle, shown at right. Both of these critters have not yet been identified!



Friends Network Conference **September Activity Report**

Our normal activity day this month was altered to allow for attendance at the Friends Network Conference, held at Rawson on the weekend of September 7 to 9. Only Ken, Cathy and I registered for the Conference (although Peter was on the list at Rawson, we didn't see him over the weekend), mainly to set up the Friends of Morwell NP display and lead the conference activities involving walks in Morwell NP.

Cathy and I arrived at Rawson as soon as we could after sorting out work and household requirements, carting up the display boards and paraphernalia. Initially we spent 30 minutes wandering around the place, unable to locate the venue despite guide maps indicating the location. Eventually we tracked down the right place at the end of a very dark road, found a couple of stray organisers, registered successfully and were directed to the restaurant where everyone else was having, or waiting for, dinner. We joined the queue, put in our order, tracked down Ken (who had arrived and settled in mid-afternoon), then commenced the long wait for dinner to arrive. Mine wasn't too far away, Ken finished his and grabbed my car keys to start setting up the displays, then came back to ask how to open my cranky tailgate lock just as I finished my meal. Cathy was still waiting for her dinner, so I left her to it and went with Ken to get my car open. We had our display set up in no time and were settling down to listen to the opening presentations of the conference before Cathy had received and dealt with her dinner. Things were a little behind time, but we managed to fit in all the obligatorics before heading home at about 10.30pm.

Saturday morning arrived clear and sunny, but due to some more domestic urgencies we didn't get back to Rawson until 11.30am, just in time for the last workshop of the morning, a discussion on the pros and cons of digital photography with regard to Friends groups and their activities. Lunch was next on the agenda, followed by the guided tours of the various parks and other attractions in the area. Since there weren't enough takers for the walks in Morwell NP, Cathy and I weren't required as leaders, so we tacked onto the group heading for Peterson's Lookout in Tyers Regional Park. We had a most pleasant afternoon strolling around the area in the company of other Friends group members and Parks Victoria reps, in particular Leon Costermans, author of a couple of excellent botanical tomes. Meanwhile, Ken led a small but keen group around the Fosters Gully circuit: his account of the walk is added below;

On the afternoon of Saturday 8th September I led a party from the Friends Network Conference for a walk around Fosters Gully. It was a long drive from Rawson, but we still had plenty of time for a leisurely walk and the 8 participants seemed to thoroughly enjoy the visit to the park. Orchids were perhaps the most interesting items we found. They included Maroonhoods, Tall Greenhoods, Common Bird Orchid, the Butterfly Orchid (in bud), leaves of Stately Helmet Orchids, Autumn Bird Orchids and Waxlips, and finally we found on the return leg of the walk through the Stringybark forest, flowering plants of the Mayfly Orchid (*Acianthus caudatus*). This was pleasing because it was a new location in the park for this orchid. Those who travelled in my car were also pleased when we saw a Lyrebird cross the road ahead of us during the drive back to Rawson.

On Sunday morning, Cathy and I made our appearance a bit late as usual, but just in time to learn that we had won an award for the best display at the conference. So we had our photos taken for inclusion in the next FriendsNet newsletter and Ken was able to choose any book he liked from the sales table. He settled on a beautiful little book on the Flora of the Otway Plain & Ranges 1 by Enid Mayfield. Since we had missed most of the morning's presentations, we weren't inclined to stay around, so we packed up the display equipment and headed off into the wilds of Tyers Park around Moondarra to see if we could track down any interesting orchids. We had no luck whatsoever, just a lot of frustration at all the tracks we couldn't access because of locked Gippsland Water gates. It was a pleasant day for a drive in the bush, nevertheless, and we arrived home in the late afternoon satisfied with our endeavours.