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# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## *Newsletter – February 2008*

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

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G'day all, welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. Time has gotten away from me once again, I'm a bit late, but hopefully this newsletter will reach you before our next activity and you will all be reminded to show up and do your bit. Cathy and I have just returned from a long weekend away, camping in the Alpine NP along the Wellington River above Licola. The roads up there have only just opened up in the last few weeks, after some major assessments and the beginnings of repair after the January 2007 fires and the June 2007 floods. We barely recognised the place, having last been there in December 2006, two weeks before the fires began. Our favourite campsite was still closed pending repairs, with the bush toilet having burned down, many fallen trees blocking access and a layer of silt covering the site itself, anywhere between 12 and 24 inches in depth, so we camped a bit further up at the Wellington Horseyards, where a little patch of bush had escaped the flames. Both the Wellington and Macalister Rivers had also changed dramatically since our last visit, with huge piles of rocks, silt and debris scattered over riparian zones scraped clean of their normal vegetation cover. All the little gullies were in a similar condition and those that cross the road had blocked their culverts, resulting in plenty of washouts and the road closure for the last 6 months.

Despite the destruction, though, the place looks terrific! The vast majority of trees have survived and have been sprouting vigorously. Although there is a reduction in the canopy cover, everything is lush and green underneath and the germination of seedlings in the ash beds is spectacular. Apparently, there are some areas where the fire has been particularly hot and regeneration not so successful, but most of the places we visited were well on their way to recovery. Around our campsite wildlife was going about its business as usual, with many species of birds sighted (Pardalotes, Satin Bowerbirds, Noisy Friarbirds, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters, Kookaburras, Currawongs, King Parrots, Crimson Rosellas and Lyrebirds, to name a few), a couple of furry critters (Wombats, Brushtail Possums) and a couple of reptiles (Water Dragons, a Lace Monitor and some unidentified smaller lizards). Less welcome was a feral cat that traversed our campsite one evening; times like those a machine gun would be handy!

Enough of the Adventures of Cathy and Mike, back to matters of relevance to Morwell NP. In the mailbox has been some of our regular receipts, namely FriendsNet Newsletter No 61 (November 2007), Friends of Coolart Newsletter 4/07 and Under Control Magazine No 36 (October 2007). I'll be handing them over to whoever wants a read at the next activity, let me know if this is you.

## **February Activity**

Our next activity is scheduled for Sunday, February 17, 2008 at 10am. It will be a repeat of last months activity, that is a Weir Walk Weed Removal session, although we will cover a different section of Billys Creek, probably starting at the Weir and working our way downstream. We will meet at the Junction Road gate ready for transport to the Weir area. As always, you will need clothing and footwear suitable for walking in and along the creek, your own lunch and refreshments and any personal tools, such as waders or secateurs, you would care to use.

## **Weed Wars – Episode XVI** **January Activity Report**

We weren't off to a good start for our first weeding activity since February 2007. The turn of the key in the Pajero's ignition resulted in nothing more than a tired clunk. Connecting the jumper leads across to the auxiliary battery produced exactly the same response. A quick theft of the battery out of the camper trailer finally gave us the desired result and we were under way, only a little behind time. Waiting for us at Junction Road were Rob, Reg, Beryl and Danny. We knew Wendy wasn't coming, but Ken hadn't arrived by 1015am, so we boarded the vehicles and headed for the weir. There weren't too many pairs of waders in good condition, but luckily there weren't too many workers wanting them, Reg had his own, Cathy and I didn't want them, and so there were enough serviceable pairs to outfit Rob, Beryl and Danny. I fed my face on some beautifully sweet and juicy currants (*Coprosma quadrifida*) on a nearby bush, while waiting for the others to prepare.

We walked up to the junction of the Blue Gum Hill and Coprosma Tracks, found an access point to the creek, Reg, Danny and I headed upstream while Rob, Beryl and Cathy went downstream. There was plenty of Tutsan to be found, both well established plants and seedlings, both on the waterline and up on the creek-side flats. Lots of Spear and Californian Thistles, too, with the occasional Teasel and Foxglove. A feast of plump, ripe blackberries tided me over until we reached the first creek crossing on the Coprosma Track, just in time for lunch. Despite our best efforts of track maintenance back in March and April 2007, the Coprosma Track was very overgrown, virtually disappearing in places. On the way back to the weir for lunch, we found Peter pulling out weeds on the flats adjacent to the track, after arriving late and walking up to the weir in search of us. We also found the other three still working in the creek, even though it was well past Cathy's normal lunch time.

After lunch Reg, Danny and I started working upstream from the weir, while Rob, Cathy, Beryl and Peter walked back to where they had stopped earlier. We still found a few Tutsan, pulled out a few Madeira Winter-cherry plants in the spot that they seem to grow up in every year, had a look at half a dozen Damsel Flies resting together on some grass stems, sampled a few ripe, but bitter White Elderberry fruits, but still met up with the other crew only an hour later. They also had found fewer weeds to remove and had worked towards us at a quicker rate than expected. Although a bit earlier than it could have been, it was a convenient place to call it a day, so we did and headed back to the vehicles to tidy up and head for home.