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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – March 2010

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaeaan.net>
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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. Welcome to autumn and approach of colder mornings. This month Peter has been good to me by writing about March's activity. On that weekend I got to do some walking in Tarra-Bulga National Park (between the showers).

Included on the next page is an article from the Latrobe Valley Express of 18th April about the plan to create a walk from Morwell National Park to Tarra-Bulga National Park.

April Activity

10.00am-3.00pm Saturday 17th April

Saturday 17th April is the Churchill Festival. This will be a great event for the town of Churchill and a chance to celebrate. The Friends of Morwell National Park will have a stand to tell people about the Friends' group and to encourage more people to get involved. Come and visit us on the stand.

Next month we will be back to working in the Park as normal.

Note: this is a change of activity from the original published 2010 calendar of activities.

Below is a message from Jenny:

"As you know the Friends of Morwell National Park will be hosting a stand at the Churchill Festival as our April activity. The Festival runs from 10am-3pm on Saturday the 17th of April. Mike, Cathy and Jenny will set up in the morning and Jenny will pack up the equipment at the end of the day (hopefully with a few helpers)! If you are coming along, please give Jenny a call on 5172 2502 or email jbrown@parks.vic.gov.au to ensure there are enough Friends to look after the stand through the day. Jenny will tally up everyone's availability and send a roster around for the day. Half a day, say 10-1230 or 1230-3pm would be fine - but please feel free to stay all day if you can and enjoy the Festival! Please let Jenny know ASAP (before 9th April would be appreciated) of your availability and intention to attend."

Thanks heaps and hope to see you at the Festival on the 17th.

Friends of Morwell National Park Inc: PO Box 19, Churchill, 3842, <http://morwellnp.pangaeaan.net>.

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Take a walk on the Strzelecki Track

feature

By **EBONNIE LORD**

AN 85 kilometre bush walk to Tarra Valley and beyond, which could harness the international ecotourist market, was launched at the Morwell National Park on Thursday.

More than 50 people attended the opening of the 'Grand Strzelecki Track' at the Billy's Creek park in the foothills of the Jeeralangs, where the State Government pledged \$500,000 for the project.

The track is the result of two communities and their ideas coming together and will connect the Morwell National Park, Tarra Bulga National Park and Balook in a three to four day walk.

Speakers said the walk could garner the reputation of Tasmania's iconic Overland Hike and showcase the area for its cool temperate rainforests, mountain grey gums, pristine streams, rock pools, waterfalls, giant tree fern gullies and countless fauna such as the

genetically unique Strzelecki koala.

Works have already begun and will include signposted directions, camp sites and historical information boards about traditional land owners the Brataualung people.

Sections of the walk edge on the Traralgon Creek catchment affected by the Black Saturday bushfires.

Grand Strzelecki Track group spokesman and Jeeralang resident Andrew Booth said local bushwalkers from Billy's Creek came up with the idea, wanting a longer walk to appreciate the area.

"It started off as a pipe dream from a bunch of local bush walkers," Mr Booth said.

He said the walk treks through diverse ecological terrains from valleys, to 700m peaks at Mount Tassie and covers five creek crossings including Traralgon Creek, Merriman's Creek and Mack's Creek.

"The walk is really varied, often when I walk early in the morning there are several lyrebirds and a

lot of other wildlife," he said.

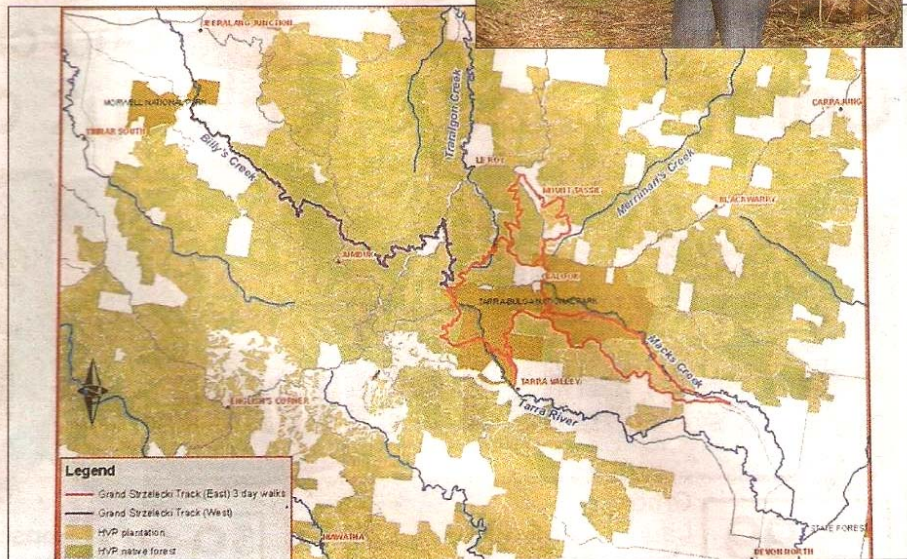
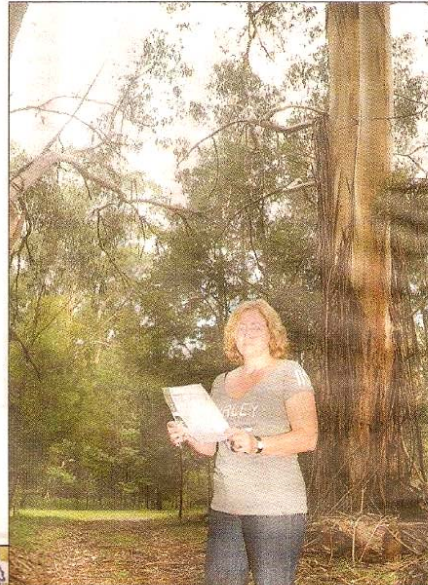
The Grand Strzelecki Track has received \$502,000 from the State Government Regional Development Victoria and the Bendigo Bank Community Enterprise Foundation to construct the walk.

Also at the lunch \$100,000 was announced for the Koornalla and Le

Roy memorial parks and \$12,264 for the Mirboo North Bowling Club to upgrade their air conditioning.

Parks Victoria is also undertaking a \$483,000 upgrade of the Tarra Bulga National Park.

The Grand Strzelecki Track community groups will help maintain the tracks and sections of the walk are expected to be completed later this year.



Grand track: The 85 kilometre track takes in some amazing scenery as avid bushwalker Pam Kelly (inset) knows.

March Activity report – Coprosma Track
Peter McDonald

We met at Junction Road at 10.00am on Sunday 21 March. There was Ken, Wendy, Reg, Margaret, Ranger Jenny (recently returned from USA and Canada), and Peter.

The scheduled task was Coprosma track maintenance. It had been some time since we worked on the track - no one could remember exactly when - was it 1 or 2 years ago?

Not knowing what state the track would be in, we split into two groups for the trip in along Billy's Creek track. Reg was leading in his 4WD when he stopped to point out a koala that was crossing the creek across a fallen log. The koala's problem was that the log selected did not cross the creek completely, so the koala had stopped halfway across. With Ken trying to get that special photo, the koala retreated to a nearby wattle and propped. We could see this koala was a healthy juvenile and in an area not usually considered koala country.

We parked at the start of Coprosma track, selected a range of tools and set forth to start clearing a succession of plants and weeds, thankful that we had a cooler day for tackling the regrowth. As expected, the start of Coprosma track was in the best state and from there we worked steadily clearing nettles, bracken and foxgloves. Wendy even managed to spot some Tutsan for variety.

By 12.30 the troops were looking for lunch so we returned to the vehicles to eat and enjoy the bird life in this very relaxing picnic spot. Jenny brought out a container of homemade chocolate chip cookies to hand out and keep us going for the afternoon's work.

Taking up our tools again, we crossed Billy's Creek to work on Californian thistles. At one stage there was some debate between Margaret and Wendy who were unsure whether the track went to the left or to right of that tree? Ken went forward to blaze the way. We wondered - why are the least wanted plants the ones that are so prolific?

On reaching the rise to Blue Gum Hill another koala was



spotted wide awake, swinging away on a eucalypt branch as a cold front with wind and some rain came through. We cleared as far as the open area above the tree cover and then noticing that the koala was now relaxed and asleep, took that as a signal to pack up for the day as we were starting to wilt.

Ken had struck out up Blue Gum Hill track reconnoitering, but everyone else was happy to wait for his return before returning to the parked vehicles. On the return along Coprosma track we could see that we had accomplished more than was anticipated at the day's start.

A great effort.

