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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – April 2012

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

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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. The weather continues cool and wet, something we would not normally expect at this time of the year. The rain gauge has had around 100mm, a lot more than March for the last few years. The Park at the moment is very green and very lush, again something you would not normally expect at this time of the year.

The Grand Strzelecki Track is nearly complete and should be ready for the opening on the weekend of May 6th and 7th. Over this weekend the track will be opened and a number of public events will occur. As part of the opening they want people to help out on the days with registration and helping with the people who will come on the day. There will be activities at both Balook and Billy's Creek. More details about this, next month.

Parks Victoria officers continue with their work to rule and as part of the work to rule there is the non-support of volunteer groups. It would be good if these employment negotiations could be resolved quickly, so that support for groups like ours can resume.

That month's activity was a good day for the group with Wendy, Emma and Rod signing up as new members and Matt taking the membership form to be completed.

Over the last month the training has been determined. Increased money has been located to fund five for the chainsaw course and two for the chemical course. This will allow Mike, Peter, John, Matt and Darren to complete the three day chainsaw course while Cathy and Emma will undertake the chemical training. For the chemical accreditation Cathy and Emma will be joined by Peter. As long as one accredited person is with the group, we can undertake activities which require the use of chemicals. This is important since having a ranger at future activities is not guaranteed.

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

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Other members: Mary Austin, Wendy Steenbergen, Margaret Barker, Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Reg Felmingham, Wendy McDonald, Joan Sikkema, Kate Richardson, Hilmar Batza, Bronwyn Grass, Australian Plant Society (Latrobe Valley).

March Activity Report

Sunday 18th March

At this month's activity we had Wendy, John, Ken, Peter, Emma, Rod, Darren, Wendy, Beryl, Mike, Cathy, Matt and Rob in attendance. Matt was along for his first activity, but this time he had only called in to meet the group and collect the membership form. Matt plans to be along for the next activity. Rob was along to remove weed plants he has located previously including some Banana Passionfruit.

Ken and Mike went to collect the waders and poisons while the rest of us organized ourselves. The group walked to the Baniff Road creek crossing where Wendy, John, Emma and Rod donned waders while Cathy, Mike, Beryl and Darren travelled to Potato Flat to get into their waders. Cathy, Mike, Beryl and Darren worked downstream from the Potato Flat creek crossing while Wendy, John, Emma and Rod worked upstream from Baniff Road creek crossing. Ken stayed on dry ground and photographed lichens along the banks. Both groups found many Tutsan plants, many of which were advanced plants, both in flower and in fruit. Many bags of flowers and berries were collected.

When the two groups met up lunch was had. Rob had also returned to join us for lunch. Lunch involved the discussion of animal identification and koala dissection. This was a great conversation to have while eating lunch.

After lunch the groups moved further down the creek towards the car park. After lunch the area covered was between the track (and creek) dogleg just after the steep downhill and the Baniff's Road creek crossing. Many more large Tutsan plants were located and many bags were filled with flowers and berries. At one point while many large plants were being removed, Ken was pressed into service to remove berries while more plants could be removed. Another willow was also found and poisoned. The photo below shows the group ready to enter the creek.





At the middle of the day (just before lunch) we were fortunate enough to spot a Cormorant. The Cormorant watched our progress for quite a while. It was not affected by our presence in the creek and happily watched us. It allowed both groups to work towards it and Ken was also able to come in to take some photos. When the bird had had enough of our company it flew off to allow us to remove the Tutsan around where the bird was.

The **Little Pied Cormorant**, **Little Shag** or **Kawaupaka** (*Microcarbo melanoleucos*) is a water bird, found around the coasts, islands, estuaries, and inland waters of Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and around the islands of the south-western Pacific and the sub-Antarctic. It is a small short-billed cormorant usually black above and white below with a yellow bill and small crest. (Wikipedia)





The last two photographs were taken by Ken Harris. Thank you for the photos, Ken.

April Activity

10.00am Sunday 15th March

The group will meet at 10.00am at the Junction Road car park to complete some track maintenance along the Grand Strzelecki Track. This will be a great opportunity to explore the new track before its grand opening a few weeks later. The track has a number of creek crossings so expect to get your feet wet. You will need to bring your lunch (suitable to carry with you) and clothing suitable for the weather conditions on the day.