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# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

*Newsletter – June 2012*

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

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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter.

The Grand Strzelecki Track was officially opened on the weekend of May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. A report about that event follows. While completing the walk a few things were observed.

Pipeline Track has been cleared and widened. Previously Pipeline Track had been blocked by a large land slip and needed machinery to clear the large amount of soil which had fallen onto the track. It is great that this track has had clearing work completed, has been widened and access to the Park from Baniffs Road has been restored.

Related to the Grand Strzelecki Track, it looks promising that we may get a toilet block near Billy's Creek as part of their track constructions. We can only hope this happens since the toilet facilities are badly needed. Thanks to the track's constructors, we now have a new picnic table at Billy's Weir and new sign where the Grand Strzelecki Track enters the southern part of the park.



Sadly upstream in Billy's Creek there many creek banks filled with advanced Tutsan plants in full flower and fruit and many sections of the track have Tutsan plants growing in them. This shows us how difficult it will be to remove Tutsan from the National Park.

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

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## Grand Strzelecki Track Opening

The Grand Strzelecki Track was officially opened on the weekend of May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. On Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup> May the focus was on Morwell National Park (Billy's Creek). More activities followed the next day around Tarra-Bulga National Park, at the other end of the track.

The day started with many early starters out and ready for the walk. There was a small tribe of people who came out to organize the registration and quiz, erection of marquees, the banner and tents, multimedia presentations, providing breakfast, selling of t-shirts and hats, and the organizers for the official opening. The area had turned into a small village. The Park had even gained some toilets, abet only for a short time. The event had been well promoted via local television, radio and newspapers.

The day started with a crowd of over 150 people. People had travelled from all over Gippsland and some had come from Melbourne. The day started with a welcome to country and smoking ceremony. The walkers were welcomed by Latrobe City Mayor Ed Vermuluen and the track was officially opened by the State member for Morwell – Russell North.

Cathy and John busily handed out Friends of Morwell National Park brochures.

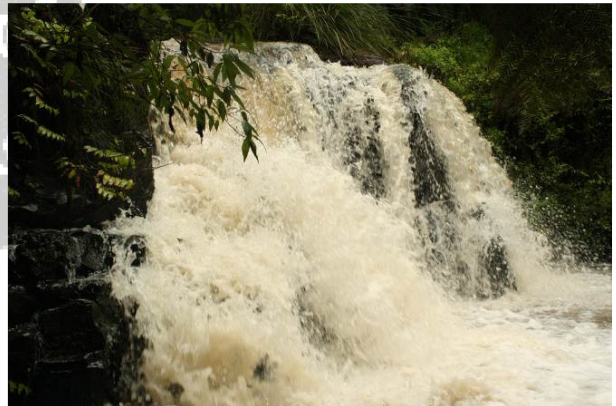


Very detailed topographical maps of the walk had been produced, which detailed the 68 creek crossings that would be made in the 13.7 kilometer trip. With creek levels high because of recent rains, there was concern whether the trip could be made along the whole track. Some get out points along the track allowed some of the walkers to travel a part of the track and then be transported back.



The walk started with all walkers following the Morwell Pipe Band along Billy's Creek. About 30 walkers continued on from there to travel upstream (to be later returned by minibus transport). About 40 walkers then returned to the car park to be taken by a fleet of vehicles (provided by Alpine Adventures) to the Jumbuk Rest Area. Of our group, Ken was determined and he was going to make the trek upstream, while Darren travelled with the downstream group.

The walkers got very wet and muddy with most creek crossings being knee deep and the track containing many areas of soft mountain soil. The soil collected on your boots was washed off at the next creek crossing. Many of the walkers skidded and slid along sections of the track, and this made it more difficult for following groups. This was also noticeable when the walking groups overlapped and the track was more roughed making footing even more difficult. The muddy marks the walkers wore at the end of the day were marks of merit.

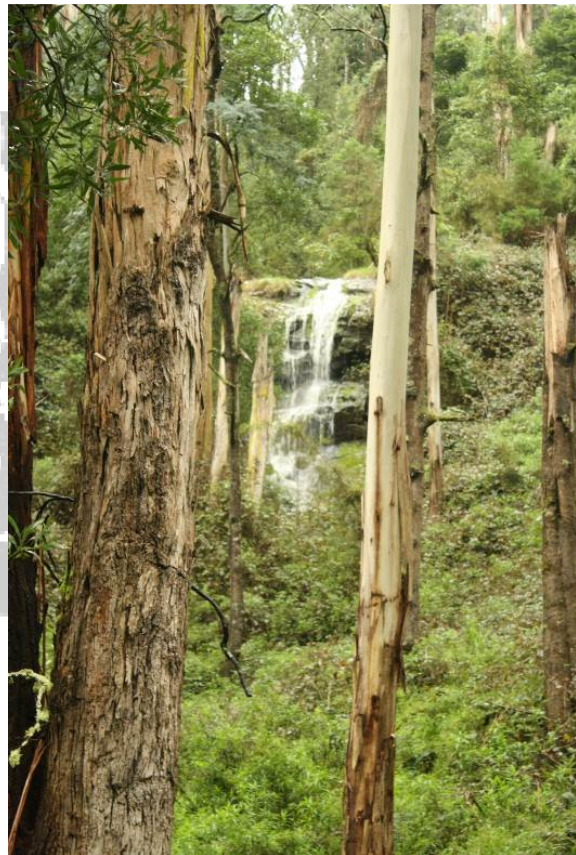




At the early creek crossings walkers would seek out stepping stones and tried to remain dry, but by the of the walk end they just walked through the creeks crossings knowing they were very wet by then. The creek crossings were hard since the recent rains had made the creek muddy and finding your footing in the creek was difficult. Time and care is needed. The rain held off during the morning but started as drizzle and got heavier in the afternoon.

Another challenge of the walk was the leeches. They were many and they were determined. We were regularly locating them on ourselves and I even found them later when I got home.

The 13.7 kilometer walk took our group about 5½ hours because of the difficult terrain and many creek crossings. If others are going to complete this walk they need to be prepared for a slow trek across a wet and difficult terrain. It will be easier in summer when the creek level is down and the track will be firmer under foot. More details of the Grand Strzelecki Track are available from <http://www.grandstrzeleckitrack.org.au/>.



## May Activity Report

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May

This month the group split to complete two different activities. One group travelled to Mount Worth State Park to work with the FNCV Fungi Group to complete a fungi survey. The remainder worked in the Park on the nesting boxes.

In the crew that worked on the nesting boxes we had Wendy, John, Margaret, Beryl and Darren. In preparation for today John had collected the gate key, nesting box map and coordinates and GPS from Ken. While John and Darren put up the six new bat boxes and one repaired nesting box, the girls removed some weeds. It was a sad indication that there will always be weeds to be removed.

We all had an effective day where some of the weeds have been removed and some trees guards collected. The new bat boxes have been put into the areas other the nesting boxes are located and some repairs were made.

## June Activity

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> June 10.00am

**Note:** this is a change from the original calendar

We will meet at the Kerry Road car park to undertake some track maintenance. You will need to bring your lunch and clothing suitable for the weather conditions on the day.

