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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – September 2012

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

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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. This month we have a bit for you. Included is the report from the last activity, minutes from the recent Annual General Meeting and Committee Meetings and 2011/12 President's Report. The President's Report makes very interesting reading and it makes you reflect that we have done a bit over the last year.

At the Annual General Meeting the office bearers for the coming year were decided and this year the leadership team is the same as for last year.

In further news, construction of a new toilet block as started at Kerry Road. The septic tank has been installed and further construction is expected to start soon. The toilet will be a made from a pre-fabricated kit called a Burton. It will consist of a single, unisex cubicle. It is hoped to have the toilet open for the public by the September school holidays.

The toilet block has been sited further along Foster's Gully track, further away from the Kerry's Road car park. The toilets are being paid from our 25th anniversary grant and the remaining monies are coming from Parks.

The Grand Strzelecki track remains closed. In June, heavy rains resulted in the creek flooding and much track damage occurred. So after being officially opened in May, the track has only been opened for a few weeks. Hopefully the track will open again during spring.

Ken over the last month has given a talk about the Park to the Moe Probus group. More recently he has discussed his mothing techniques at a conference in Bendigo.

Over the last few months some of our group have been completing further training to assist us with the activities we complete in the Park. Mike, Rod, Peter, John and Darren have now successfully completed their chain saw training. Cathy and Emma are still mid-way through their chemical course.

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

President: Mike Beamish

Vice-President: Ken Harris

Secretary: Beryl Nelson

Treasurer: John Barker

Publicity: Peter McDonald

Public Officer: Beryl Nelson

Newsletter Editor: Darren Hodgson, 51222108, hodgson.darren.d@edumail.vic.gov.au

Other members: Mary Austin, Wendy Steenbergen, Margaret Barker, Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Reg Felmingham, Wendy McDonald, Joan Sikkema, Kate Richardson, Hilmar Batza, Bronwyn Grass, Matt Campbell and Kerry Proud, Wendy Ritchie, Emma Pallett and Rod Haggith, Australian Plant Society (Latrobe Valley).

August Activity Report

For this month's activity we had John, Beryl, Mike, Cathy, Emma, Rod, Darren and Tenho (a Japanese exchange student) in attendance. The industrial action by the Parks staff has ended, but we did not have a ranger with us, since Craig is currently on holidays.

The group met at the Junction Road car park and planned the day ahead. The group organized to remove weeds along the creek banks from the car park to Baniff Road. John, Emma and John started from the car park, working upstream while Mike, Cathy, Beryl, Tenho and Darren started from Baniff Road working downstream.

Most of work was completed along the banks where some of the undergrowth had been knocked down by previous flooding. This made finding the weeds easier, but provided more obstacles to navigate around. The tutsan may have been knocked down by the flood waters, but they were ready to burst into large bushes. Many advanced tutsan plants were removed along with quite a few prunus.

At a few places we needed to clear the track of trees which had recently fallen and were blocking the track.

The groups met up in the car park to have lunch. At lunch John, Emma and Rod left, so Mike, Cathy, Beryl, Tenho and Darren completed the remaining creek section. Over the day we collected some tree guards which had been washed down the creek and these have been added to one of the piles of wire beside the main track.

Tenho had the opportunity to discover and get close to some Australian wildlife.

During the big rains of winter, lots of damage has occurred in the Park and many trees have come down. Most of this damage is still to be found around the Park.



Friends of Morwell National Park

Annual General Meeting - Sunday 12^h August 2012

Annual General Meeting declared open at 1.45pm

Attendance: - Beryl Nelson, Wendy Steenbergen, Darren Hodgson, Ken Harris, Peter McDonald, John & Margaret Barker, Cathy & Mike Beamish, Imei Chang.

Apologies: - Craig Campbell, Andy Gilmore & Wendy McDonald.

Previous AGM minutes held on 7th August 2011 were read and accepted as a true account – by general acceptance of those present.

The President's Report was read and accepted - **Moved** Ken Harris, **Seconded** by John Barker
Ranger's Report - not available as MNP has no appointed Ranger

Treasurer's Report was read and accepted - **Moved** by Beryl Nelson, **Seconded** by Peter McDonald

The Treasurer reported that we have 20 financial members, for 2011-12.
MNP Term Deposit expires in October 2012.

Motion was moved by **Wendy Steenbergen** that Incorporation fees (\$43.90) be paid for this financial year, **Seconded** by Darren Hodgson.

Election of Office Bearers:-

President – Mike Beamish (**Moved** - Margaret, **Seconded** - Wendy).

Vice President – Ken Harris (**Moved** - Wendy, **Seconded** - Margaret).

Secretary/Public Officer - Beryl Nelson (**Moved** - Ken **Seconded** - Darren).

Treasurer - John (**Moved** - Beryl, **Seconded** - Darren).

Newsletter - Darren (**Moved** - Mike **Seconded** - Ken).

Publicity - Peter (**Moved** - Kathy, **Seconded** - Margaret).

General Business: -

It was decided that membership fees will remain the same - **\$10.00 per person, \$15.00 per family or group** (moved by John, seconded by Ken) passed unanimously.

Parks Victoria advised Mike that the new toilet at Kerry Road, is under construction and should be ready for the September School holidays. Parks thanked the Friends Group for our monetary contribution towards the cost of the new toilet.

Annual General Meeting declared closed at 2.25pm

Friends of Morwell National Park
President's Annual Report for 2011 to 2012
July 31, 2012

Here ends another successful year for the Friends of Morwell National Park. After the surprise of nomination and election to the position of President without any warning, my first actions as leader of the group was to be absent for 2 months while attending to commitments with APS Latrobe Valley and going on a trip through the Simpson Desert in northern South Australia. Serves you all right for throwing me in the deep end! Following is a synopsis of our year in the Park:

August- Craig Campbell joined us for the first time as our designated Ranger following the departure of Bronwyn Grass, to help us plant some 200 tubestock, a few Silver Wattles next to the Junction Road car-park and more Varnish Wattle, Blue Gums and Blackwoods into cleared pine plantation adjacent to Jumbuk Road. I Mei and Jhinfeng came along once again to lend a hand and it was good to see some natural regeneration of Kangaroo Apples, Wattles, Blue Gums, Pelargoniums, Golden Tips and Bugles amongst the weeds in the firebreak. We also found the carcass of an *Antechinus stuartii*, Brown Antechinus (most likely), the first record in this section of the Park, which was bagged and sent off for official identification.

September- Nearly 200 tubes planted out on Blue Gum Hill after some dramas in getting the ute, trailer and quad bike into the site to transport the gear. Judith joined us for the first time, bringing with her experience of environmental work in Africa. We also received the sad news of the passing of Tom Lawless, a long-time member and supporter of the Park and the Friends Group.

October- The remaining 100 tubes were planted out on Blue Gum Hill in the morning, followed by the annual Koala count in the afternoon. Some good advertising by Peter led to several members of the public joining in, 3 tracks were surveyed, and all recorded Koalas for a total of 8 for the day.

November- Early in the month, Ken, Beryl, Cathy and I attended the presentation of the PV Kookaburra Awards, for which our Group had been nominated. We didn't win, but came in with an honourable mention in a field of 13. With Ranger Mark, four of us struggled up the ridge from the Car-park Flat to the top of Zig Zag, pulling out star pickets and fence wire. Two Copperhead snakes kept us on our toes! Meanwhile, Ken and Cathy undertook the annual orchid survey in Foster's Gully, with newcomers Emma and Rod. Overall, the orchids were looking a picture due to the good winter and spring rainfall, but the survey plots are suffering from aging host plants. In the evening, we had an excellent representation of our group at the Parks Victoria Friends and Volunteers BBQ in Traralgon, where we were able to gain the ear of some PV personnel to pursue our issue of a new toilet for the Park and another grant opportunity.

December- Early in the month we were invited to meet with the local State Member, Russell Northe, for an informal chat in the Park about our successful grant applications. A quick ring-around resulted in a great turnout of our members, with most of the active group making an appearance and making the most of the opportunity to promote our cause. Due to lack of toilet facilities in the Park, the consensus was to accept John and Margaret's offer to host our end of year BBQ. Before relaxing though, we commenced our annual nest-box survey: the first box we looked at was closest to the gate and contained at least 4 Sugar Gliders (good), but at least 3 of them made a hasty exit as soon as we moved away (bad). Moving to the far end of the area, we next checked the most recently installed boxes; at least 2 of them (1 a bat box) contained what we suspect are Feathertail Gliders, which would be a new record for the Park, but Ken's attempts to find and photograph the animals on 3 occasions were unsuccessful. Craig and John cooked up a storm (yes, it did start raining!) at the BBQ, to finish up the year with a pleasant and relaxing social gathering.

January- The remainder of the nest-boxes were examined for their contents and once again a number of Sugar Gliders, at least 15, and a Ringtail Possum were noted. One box couldn't be located; we suspect it was in the middle of a pile of fallen timber. Two others were found on fallen tree trunks, one of which was relocated to a nearby tree and the other was taken by John for refurbishment. Disturbingly, a group of at least 6 adjacent boxes were missing lids, some of which were found at the base of the tree, but others nowhere to be seen. We hope this is not a sign of tampering or poaching!

February- Cathy and I did a runner this month: it was the only long weekend we would get for a while, so we headed up into the wilds of the Alpine National Park for some blissful R&R. Meanwhile, the crew began this season's weed-pulling exercise along Billys Creek; it was disappointing to hear of the number of Tutsan plants that are still being located and removed from the creek environs. A Copperhead snake was also sighted during the day. Our Ranger was absent due to industrial action, which we all support, though it is a shame our governing bodies see fit to strip public services of funding and resources.

March- Industrial action continued, but we still had a great turnout, with 4 of our visitors signing up for membership. More weed-pulling along Billys Creek ensued and again a large number of mature Tutsan plants were located and removed, some of them several metres away from the creek. A couple of willows were also found, one removed and the other left for the next exercise.

April- The Grand Strzelecki Track is complete and due to be opened in early May, so we went for a sneak preview stroll to locate the southern boundary of the Park. Lots of weeds were evident and the spraying teams had been a bit wayward with their aim in a couple of places, but for the time being the track is well defined, the large number of creek crossings are in reasonable condition and there are some very pretty stretches of countryside now accessible to the public. Later calculations revealed we had overshot the Park boundary by a considerable margin, so some of Ken's new recordings are still outside the Park (e.g. *Pittosporum bicolor*). In late April, six of the group participated in the theory component of Chainsaw training, whetting their appetites for the practicals in mid May.

May- Several of us attended the opening of the Grand Strzelecki Track at Junction Road, with Darren and Ken joining in with the walking groups and the rest of us networking as best we could. Hopefully some new members will result. The chainsaw training practical was delayed due to inclement weather. Our scheduled activity was split in two due to an invitation from FNCV Fungi SIG and Friends of Mt Worth to join in with their Fungi Foray, attended by Ken, Cathy & I and Daryl & Judy (APS LV), while John & Darren led the rest of the crew to finalise some nest box maintenance at Billys Creek.

June- The crew headed over to the western side of the Park to undertake some track maintenance from the Brewster's Road entrance, around Silvertop Hill, Muttonwood Creek and the boundary firebreaks. From all reports, some trained and authorised persons with chainsaws would have been handy, but once again the training was deferred due to ordinary weather, including heavy rain and flooding which closed our section of the Grand Strzelecki Track. In the end, we ignored the dire weather report and completed 2 mainly dry days of practicals on June 30 and July 1.

July- More track maintenance was completed on the western side of the Park, with the crew working along the boundary fence from Muttonwood Creek to Stringybark Ridge. Again, a chainsaw would have been handy but we are still not yet kitted out with safety equipment and are still unsure of our authorisation status within the Park.

So, the year ends with a number of issues that we will need to address moving forward:

- The industrial action that took place within Parks Victoria and affected the amount of support and guidance we received from our Ranger, is now over, though the underlying issues are yet to be resolved. Adding to the problem is the reduction in personnel and financial and material support from the State Government to sections of the public service, including Parks Victoria. Should we undertake a letter-writing campaign in support of Parks Victoria and our designated Ranger?
- There are still no toilet facilities in the Park. Though our 25th Anniversary grant was earmarked to go towards a new toilet at Kerry Road, there is still a shortfall of funding and no progress is apparent. Installation of a toilet at Billys Creek, hopefully with funding from The Grand Strzelecki Track Committee, has also not progressed. Should we undertake a letter-writing campaign to publicise this situation and gain leverage for shortfall funding or full funding and installation of toilets and other public infrastructure without the use of our grant money? Any other suggestions?
- Six members have completed chainsaw training and two have participated in a Chemical Users course, utilising our training grant money and some of our own funds. We now need to confirm with Parks Victoria our level of authority and specific job requirements for use of chainsaws and chemicals within the Park and obtain the tools and safety equipment needed to perform any work, supplemented with our personal equipment. We will need to take advantage of any funding opportunities over the next year to procure the necessary gear or source existing equipment that we can utilise when needed. Should we request re-direction of our 25th Anniversary grant for purposes other than public infrastructure?

Thank you to all members and visitors, each of you has contributed in your own way to the success of our Group and the betterment of Morwell NP. The committee members: Ken as VP, Beryl as Secretary, John as Treasurer, Peter as Publicity Officer and Darren as Newsletter Editor; thanks for all the time and energy you put into your roles, as well as the extras that you contribute. To the active members, thanks for fronting up to activities each month and volunteering your time to the cause. And to the not-so-active members, thanks for your continuing support and interest in the wellbeing of the Group and the Park, and remember that you are always welcome to become more active any time circumstances permit. Last, but not least, thank you to the Parks Victoria staff, Andy, Craig, Rob and Mark, for your efforts and conscientiousness throughout a difficult year. We hope your work circumstances will improve in the coming year.

Mike Beamish
President, Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Friends of Morwell National Park

Committee Meeting held 12th August 2012

Committee Meeting declared open 2.25pm.

Attendance: - Cathy & Mike Beamish, Beryl Nelson, Darren Hodgson, Peter McDonald, Ken Harris, Wendy Steenbergen, John & Margaret Barker & Imei Chang

Apologies: - Craig Campbell, Andy Gilmour and Wendy McDonald

Minutes of previous meeting held on 7th August 2011 were read and accepted as true account.

Moved by Wendy, **Seconded** by Margaret.

Business arising from Previous Meeting:-

Discussion regarding the need for a colour photograph on front page of MNP Newsletter – will be an ongoing search for a suitable photo.

The concrete posts that were dug up last year, haven't been utilised – seems that they aren't suitable for creek crossings. In addition there is quite a few fence lines that need to be dismantled at some stage.

Need to liaison with Parks Victoria regarding clarification of what the Friends group can clear and the use of equipment, as we have six members with a Chain Saw Certificate plus whether there needs to be a Parks presence at these activities.

Inwards Correspondence:-

Friends of Tyers Park – Newsletter No 6 December 2011.

Friends Net Newsletters No 76 August, No 77 November 2011.

Friends Net Newsletter No 78 Feb, No 79 May 2012.

DSE letter undated – Fire Management Planning – Proposed Plan Open for Comment
Email dated 1st Sept 2011 from Mike to a woman that wanted to join to Friends group.

Parks Victoria letter dated 3rd Nov 2011 – Info on new grants program.

Parks letter dated 14th Nov 2011 – 2011 Kookaburra Awards.

Parks Victoria letter dated 28th Nov 2011 Community Group Grants for which MNP was allocated \$1500.

Parks Victoria letter dated 28th Nov 2011 – advising MNP that our 25th Anniversary Grant was successful with \$5,000 being allocated.

December 2011 Community Newsletter from Russell Northe MLA

Outwards Correspondence:-

Sympathy card forwarded to the Lawless family, on the passing of Tom Lawless – a valued member of Friends of MNP.

General Business:-

The group discussed the need to buy chain saws and associated equipment as 6 members have completed the Chain Saw Certificate Course.

The meeting voted to accept the following new members into the group:

Emma Pallett, Rod Haggith, Matt Campbell, Kerry Proud, Wendy Ritchie, Imei Chang

Members thanked John for his enthusiastic work as Treasurer and craftsmanship, making nesting/bat boxes for use in the National Park.

Calendar of Activities:-

Activities are scheduled for the third Sunday of each month, with extra days scheduled as required.

Date:	Activity:	Venue and Time:
January 20	Nesting boxes survey	Junction Rd, 10.00am
February 17	Grand Strzelecki Track Weed Removal	Junction Rd, 10.00am
March 17	Grand Strzelecki Track Weed Removal	Junction Rd, 10.00am
April 21	Grand Strzelecki Track Weed Removal	Junction Rd, 10.00am
May 19	Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
June 16	Track Maintenance	Kerry Road, 10.00am
July 21	Blue Gum Hill Track Maintenance	Junction Rd, 10.00am
August 4	AGM	To be advised, 1.30pm
August 18	Blue Gum Hill Track Maintenance	Junction Rd, 10.00am
September 15	Weed removal & Track Maintenance	Junction Rd, 10.00am
October 20	Orchid Walk Koala Count	Kerry Road, 10.00am & Kerry Road, 1.30pm
November 17	Orchid Survey/Odd jobs	Junction Rd, 10.00am
December 15	Nesting boxes survey/ Christmas Function	Junction Rd, 10.00am & Kerry Road 1.00pm

Meeting declared closed at 3.20pm

September Activity

10.00am Sunday 16th September

We will meet at the Junction Road car park to undertake some track maintenance and weed removal in the Billy's Creek part of the park. You will need to bring your lunch and clothing suitable for the weather conditions on the day.