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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – November 2012

Website: <http://morwellnp.pangaean.net>
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Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter.

This month we will report about the recent Koala count and other October activities. The group also had the opportunity to check out the new toilet at Kerry Road.

Last month in the October activity, the work group started clearing fallen trees from Billys' Creek Track. They did not get far since they encountered a massive tree blocking the track, which was too large for them to remove. Parks staff have cleared this tree over the last month and access to this part of the park has been restored.

Recently the Grand Strzelecki Track has won a national award. The walk track won the 2012 Parks and Leisure Australia Award of Excellence, Inclusive and Connected Communities award. The award like this supports volunteer groups who put their heart and soul into initiating a project like this and taking part in the ongoing commitment of setting up and maintaining the tracks.

The whole Grand Strzelecki Track consists of 110 kilometers of walking tracks and 70 creek crossing with many of these being on our National Park.

The Grand Strzelecki Track was closed because of winter floods in Billy's Creek. The track is now open with the track's volunteer group having put a few days of work into improving the track. Sleepers have been added to steep areas and access along the track has been improved.

Next month Parks Victoria will again hold their Friends and Volunteers BBQ Dinner in Traralgon at **Bert Thompson Reserve** (Behind Red Rooster in Argyle Street, Traralgon) on **Sunday the 18th of November 2011**, (same day as our next activity) starting at 5.30pm. The BBQ dinner is to celebrate the significant contributions made by Friends Groups and volunteers in park management during 2012. Soft drinks and food will be provided. BYO drinks, plastic plates, cutlery and chairs.

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

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October Activity Reports

Sunday 21st October

In October there were two activities both on the 21st of October. In the morning there was the Orchid Walk and in the afternoon there was the Koala Count.

Orchid Walk

For this activity we had Wendy, John, Margaret, Mike, Cathy, Brenda, Graeme, Ashlee, Craig and Darren in attendance. For Brenda, Graeme and Ashlee it was their first activity. Graeme met the group last month while they were track clearing and he alerted Ken to an early flowering Butterfly Orchid. Ken's photograph of this orchid was in the last newsletter. Brenda was along looking especially for orchids. Ashlee is a volunteer at the local wildlife refuge.

The day started off very overcast and rain was a possibility. Fortunately it only rained a little during our walk. The group decided walk to Foster's Gully since it should have had the most orchids for us to see at this time of year. During the walk the following orchids were seen: Common Bird Orchid, Mountain Greenhood, Wax Lip Orchid, Sun Orchid and Butterfly Orchids which looked ready to flower in the next month.

It was good to walk with some experts who could quickly identify what was found. Most orchids found were just at the leaf stage, few were in flower. With it being overcast and wet, the conditions were not the best for finding flowers. It was surprising that many small plants that you would just walk past were orchids, pre or post flowering.



Koala Count

For the Koala count we had a large group (26 people) ready for seeking the elusive koalas. It was especially good since the weather was not great and rain was very possible. We were joined by a few family groups and a few locals. The event was well advertised with interviews on ABC Radio, WIN TV coverage and newspaper articles. Along for the journey was also a cameraman from WIN television taking footage for WIN news.

All of the walkers were organized into three groups. Each group had at least five-six walkers. The first group to depart was led by Peter, Cathy and Mike and they travelled over the Stringybark Ridge Walk. They were the most successful by locating 6 koalas. Ken's group with Craig, travelled by car to Jumbuk Road and walked back along the Jumbuk Road fire track to the Kerry Road car park. They had the more difficult terrain to travel and spotted two koalas. The last group was led by Beryl and Darren and they walked the Foster's Gully track. This group spotted two koalas making a total of 10 koalas located during the count.

The WIN cameraman followed the group that travelled the Foster's Gully Track. The footage he shot was shown during the following week. The total of 10 koalas was slightly more than the numbers located during the counts for the last three years.

Over the day, for people who were at both activities, they had spent the morning looking at the ground seeking small orchids and the afternoon looking into the treetops for koalas hiding from the cold. Sadly all groups did get a little wet. The rain did not hold off and since the Stringybark Ridge group had the longest walk, they got the wettest.



November Activity

Sunday 18th November

The group will meet at 10.00am at the Junction Road car park to complete the Butterfly Orchid Survey and some odd jobs.

Ken along with a recorder and few photographers will conduct the Butterfly Orchid Survey. Across five plots the survey will be conducted and hopefully we will see some improvement in the Butterfly Orchid population after this wet year. Another goal during the Butterfly Orchid Survey is get some good photos of these orchids. This is the challenge for the keen photographers.

The remainder of the group will work on some odd jobs that need to be completed. These will be determined on the morning.

You will need to bring your lunch and clothing suitable for the weather conditions on the day.

