

PO Box 19  
Churchill  
3842



# Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

## *Newsletter – April 2014*

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

A0016319X

Hello everyone and welcome to this month's newsletter. Over the last month there has been a few Green Walks in the Park. It was a Heart Foundation initiative, in association with Latrobe Council. The program aimed to get more people walking, more often, in more local parks, state parks and bushland reserves. The groups varied in size and provided the opportunity for the community to experience the park.

Peter as found a wonderful article about the Park in the recent Park Watch magazine. It reflects upon development of parks in the area and the establishment of our Park. The article provides an interesting insight into our little National Park and some of the treasures it holds. It is attached as another file and is a very interesting read.

Victorian Walks are interested in making a feature walk of Foster's Gully. It would be based upon the old numbered walk along Foster's Gully. Old copies of the original numbered walk have been located and will be passed onto Victorian Walks.

### **John's Jottings**

This will be a regular feature in the newsletter, starting with this issue. This historical relates to the Billy's Creek area of Morwell National Park. This snippet was lifted from our June 1988 newsletter.

Our wonderful summer finished with a dazzling display – perhaps it's the way of it in this bicentennial year!

The odds were high that there would be a fire, everything being so dry, although by Anzac Day we are usually relaxing our vigil. Whether it was good or bad depends on how the circumstances are viewed. The fire was contained to the Billy's Creek section of the National Park and part of the adjoining reserve forest, no private homes or property was endangered.

Luckily the wind remained very slight so the area of the burn was contained to approx. 40ha and ceased to be of concern after 12 hours, although it continued to smoulder in underground roots for some days.

Fire is the natural way of things for our Australian bush, although as a regeneration burn it was too hot although an excellent fuel reduction burn. All the same, there were some "exciting" moments for the fire fighters. The fire started at approx. 5pm near the weir and very quickly advanced up the northern ridge. The combined difficulties of terrain, access, visibility and gusts of wind made for some unpredictable conditions and we thank those people that tried to stem the fires advance. They included 16 CFL staff, 2 bulldozers, 6 CFA units and an SES unit.

The site was quite impressive. The morning of 26<sup>th</sup> brought rain and a quieter time for all, most people had worked through the night so it was left to relief crews to mop up.

Friends of Morwell National Park Inc: PO Box 19, Churchill, 3842, <http://morwellnp.pangaean.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, [hodgson.darren.d@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:hodgson.darren.d@edumail.vic.gov.au)

**Other members:** Mary Austin, Margaret Barker, Cathy Beamish, Eulalie Brewster, Matt and Kerry Campbell, Wendy McDonald, Joan Sikkema, Wendy Steenbergen, Australian Plant Society (Latrobe Valley).



## March Activity report

At this activity we had John, Matt, Beryl, Brenda, Beryl, Mike, Cathy, Peter, Wendy, Darren, Neil and ranger Shane. Neil was along for his first activity. He had seen the group at a previous activity when visiting the park with his family. Now he had the opportunity to join the group in an activity. Neil's keenness was apposite for the group. Shane spoke to group about the changes he has noticed in the park over the twelve years he has been a local ranger. The trees which started as young saplings are now becoming advanced trees.

The group met in the Junction Road car park and discussed the month past. Matt expressed an opinion about completing more often surveys of the nesting boxes. With our better equipment and the very mobile users of the boxes there may be benefits of making more surveys. The population using the boxes may change throughout the year. Shane discussed the value of the nesting boxes and of completing regular surveys. Survey data can be used to show that the park is being used by the animals or has the plants that the park is trying to protect.

The group divided into two groups. Matt, John and Peter used the chainsaw to remove some trees down across Stringybark and Muttonwood Tracks while the rest of the group undertook weed removal. The chainsaw group removed three large trees down across the outward leg of Stringybark Track and one tree down on Muttonwood Track. The weed removal group started from near the car park and worked upstream. There were some patches of dense ivy to be removed. A large variety of other weeds were located in the creek and along the banks.

When the chainsaw group had finished the groups travelled back to the car park for an early lunch. The groups changed after lunch with Mike, Cathy, Matt and John working on the bat boxes, while rest of the group reentered the creek. The progress along the creek was slow with many weeds located both in the creek and beside the creek banks.

The group working on the bat boxes first used the pole mounted camera to check the contents of the box then drilled a hole into the box if no animals were found. Fortunately a number of sugar gliders and Antechinus were located in some of the boxes. These boxes were left untouched and will be checked again next month. These animal sightings were different to the animals located in the December & January survey. This helps to indicate that the animals are very mobile and regularly change boxes. The bat boxes being used either had a moved lid which provided access or the animals had chewed out the bottom slot. The new holes will provide easier access for the animals and make it easier for us to survey the boxes without disruption to animals in the bat boxes.



Wendy has been a regular favorite in activity photos and again I took more photos of her working in the creek. This month Wendy grabbed the camera and took a photo of me. So it seems only fair to include this photo as well.



**April Activity**  
Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> April

The group will meet at 10.00am in the Junction Road car park. The group will work on two tasks – one group will put holes into the remaining bat boxes, not worked upon last month while the others will work upon weed removal along Billy Weir track and from Billy's Creek. You will need to bring your lunch along with clothing and footwear suitable for the weather conditions on the day.