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Friends of Morwell National Park Inc.

Newsletter – June 2015

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

The next Green Walk is scheduled for Tuesday 23rd June at 10am. The walk will travel to Billy's Creek Weir from the Baniff's Road car park. The guided walk will be for 60 minutes and is rated easy to moderate. Registration is essential at www.heartfoundation.org.au/active-living/walking/Pages/events-and-park-walks.aspx or call the Heart Foundation's Health Information Service on 1300 362 787.

John's Jottings

This month I am providing ongoing snippets lifted from the Morwell National Park Management Plan (1998) which I'm sure will make interesting reading for you too.

Management Plan continued from last month.....

"3.2 Vegetation

Effective vegetation management requires the overall conservation, protection and reestablishment of indigenous flora. It also requires appropriate fire regimes, control of pest plants and animals, and control of damage by visitors (sections 4.1, 4.2 and 5.2).

A total of 320 indigenous plant species, including 44 species of orchids, has been recorded in the planning area (Harris 1997). Five of these species are listed as rare or threatened in Victoria (Gullan, Cheal & Walsh 1990): Elongate Fork Fern is classed as rare in Australia and vulnerable in Victoria; Oval Fork Fern, Common Spider Orchid and Slender Tick-trefoil are considered rare in Victoria; and Southern Spider Orchid is classed as 'insufficiently known' in Victoria (NRE database 1998).

The vegetation is predominantly Damp Sclerophyll Forest dominated by Blue Gum, Mountain Grey Gum and Manna Gum. Wetter vegetation communities include some marginal Warm Temperate Rainforest and narrow strips of Fern Gully communities (Griffiths 1989).

One of the reasons for creating the Park in 1966 was to protect the uncommon epiphytic Butterfly Orchid population and its Wet Fern Gully habitat, which is locally abundant in the Park but extremely restricted within the Strzelecki Ranges. The Butterfly Orchid and rare ferns depend on stable, moist environments such as that in Fosters Gully. It is essential that disturbance of these environments is minimised and fires are excluded (sections 4.1 and 4.2).

Vegetation along the Billy's Creek Valley is highly disturbed; much of the valley has been cleared and used for grazing in the past. In some areas the natural overstorey species, mainly Blue Gum, Mountain Grey Gum and Manna Gum, remain, and Mountain Ash also occurs along Billy's Creek. The understorey along the creek, however, is weed infested (section 4.2). Rehabilitation is discussed in section 4.3.

Large old trees of Sweet Pittosporum are found in Fosters Gully, some of which support the uncommon Butterfly Orchid. Pittosporum is spreading from the steeper wetter gullies, where it may have occurred naturally (there is some doubt as to whether it is indigenous to the Strzelecki Ranges or not (Griffiths 1989), to the ridges where it is invading areas aggressively (section 4.2)."

To be continued next month.....



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May Activity Report

At this activity we had Beryl, Matt, Ken, Peter, Wendy Mc and Darren. After having a large group in for the last activity of the twilight mothing survey and walk, we had a smaller group this month. We were greeted with a fine sunny day, very different to the wet week before.

In the car park the group discussed the happenings of the last month. Beryl spoke about the wide variety of correspondence she is receiving. The need for recording and the distribution of this information was discussed. There are changes ahead for the Green Walks program. The personnel involved have changed the long term of the program looks doubtful. There are current plans to have Green Walks in the months August to December and none in July.

During the discussion, Ken made two trips to shed to collect the gear needed for the day's work. The group travelled along the Weir Track to where we finished in the creek in the March activity. The group donned the waders and entered the creek. While the group worked through the creek removing weeds, Ken surveyed along the track. Very few small Tutsan were located and most were larger plants missed in previous searches. It is good that we are having an effect on the Tutsan numbers and limiting spread of new seedlings.

Lunch was had beside new bridge which is getting a bit of use. The April Green Walk used it soon after its installation. Rob visited the group (via the new bridge) while we ate lunch. He was impressed by the work we have done and said that the bridge was a great improvement. The new culvert below the old dam was an improvement Rob had tried to achieve a few times in the past but each repair was washed away in heavy rains.

After lunch the group worked up to the first bridge on the Weir track. As we finished up four different groups of walkers entered the Park for afternoon walks.



June Activity
Sunday 21st June

The group will meet at 10.00am in the Kerry Road car park. The group will work on track maintenance around the Foster's Gully section of the park.

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

