

Horseyard Flat 20th, 21st and 22nd of November.

Joint asset building work with Parks Victoria.

Participants.

Ross Howell, Sue Howell, Annette Fleming, Bob McKee, Alan MacRae, Alan Harlow, Jan Parniac, John Kerr, Ian Blake, Vivian Lee, Craig Murray, Sharna Cole, Lois Rose, Greg Rose, Wayne Foon (Parks Victoria) and "Super Workers" Mick and Gary from Parks Victoria Sale.

Location.

Horseyard Flat camping area Moroka Road, Alpine National Park. The site is close to the Pinnacles, is the start point for the walk into Moroka Gorge and has been rated one of the ten best camper trailer camping sites in Australia by Hema Maps.

At last we had a good weather forecast for our joint work with Parks Victoria. The event had been cancelled in May due to hazardous high wind conditions. The delay did give the folk from PV and myself more time to visit the site a couple of times and refine our plans. Prior to the three days Lois, Wayne Foon and I took a load of sand and gravel mix to the site.

Our group met at Licola at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning. Annette and Bob, Lois and I had met Wayne and Sharna at the Heyfield DELWP/PV Work Centre at 7:00 to complete loading up gear and fridges of food. After a coffee, Darren and Tracy have installed a new coffee machine at the Licola store, we chased Wayne up Tamboritha Road then Moroka Road. We had a short stop at Lost Plain which was carpeted in wildflowers.

We are getting quite expert at these events now. The mandatory Site Safety Survey was undertaken, tools and other gear unloaded and people selected a task of their choice and began work.

Lois, Sharna, Annette and Sue braved the snakes and headed into the roadside scrub hoping to find, photograph and GPS plot some examples of *Pater-sonia sericea* for Jenny Lawrence from PV. This is not a rare plant but unusual in the area we were in.

A group started assembling the picnic table and seat sets beautifully made by Cliff Ireland who has just retired from PV. Others looked for the yellow painted rings indicating the fire pit sites and started digging. I battled the spooky looking spiders and gave the long drop toilet a good cleanup and a couple of repairs. Mick and Gary (super workers) arrived with another PV Land Cruiser with more gravel, cement and other gear on a trailer. We had a couple of interesting moments with PV trailers over the three days. The Heyfield tandem sheared off a set of u bolts which lead to three damaged tyres and a call for the mechanic to retrieve it.

The whole spare wheel mounting bracket sheared off the single axle tool trailer. The PV generator/welding unit gave trouble too, filling the air with thick white smoke. On the subject of PV wheeled machinery Craig looked really thrilled driving a Toyota about the work site.

By knock off time Monday our sensational team had completed the majority of the heavier work. Back at the Surveyors Creek Camp we coped well with the lack of water in the ablution block. Buckets were used to flush toilets and after a couple of false starts we had a 12 volt shower operating from buckets of hot water from the kitchen utilising Alan MacRea's shower and my Power Hub battery pack.

Thanks to the "food to share" system we had a great bar-b-que dinner with plenty of desserts and tall stories.

Tuesday was a bit of a triumph and the work was finished in time for a late lunch before heading back to Surveyors Creek. Our team had constructed four concrete fire rings, assembled and set in quick set cement four large table and seat sets, re-oiled the table sets (a very messy job), cut huge areas of long grass (thanks Bob), cleaned and repaired the toilet, searched for plants, cleared up some ugly fire pits, picked up rubbish and cleared saplings that were obscuring the Parks signs along the road.



Oh what a feeling !



The completion of the work was a bonus. As the afternoon was quite hot some of us drove down to the deep pool on Shaw Creek. A few of us swam in the freezing water while others dangled feet or just enjoyed the tranquil surroundings. Other folk stayed at Surveyors and showered, played cards and relaxed.

Dinner was provided by Wayne who had pre cooked three excellent main courses served with a choice of pasta, rice or mashed potatoes. Just in case we hadn't indulged enough there were golden syrup dumplings for dessert. A serious incident occurred as we were to start dinner when three desperate prison escapees broke into the dining room screaming and indiscriminately firing weapons - we were all expecting something from the three amigos - well done Alan, Jan and John.

Apologies to everyone who I woke up early on Wednesday morning by firing up the big V8 CAT generator at 5:45 a.m. As there was just a little site tidy up work to be done on Wednesday we had the opportunity to travel to the summit of Mt Kent. The track had been dozed during fire suppression work in late February. For many years it had been seriously rutted and overgrown. Not many four wheel drivers do the track but with Craig leading us we all made it to the summit at 1561 metres. There was quite a bit of tree dodging to get there. The effort was worth it. Not only were there some of the most spectacular views in the Southern Alps but a great display of wildflowers. One of the benefits of these multi day works is getting time to explore new places.

Back at camp we had lunch then cleaned up the kitchen and dining area, the ablution block, the cabins we had used and the general area. We formally thanked Wayne for the planning and keeping us safe in the bush before folk made their way home.

Since the three days we have received messages of thanks from PV and Four Wheel Drive Victoria. We have made Horseyard Flat, beside the Moroka River, a much more inviting campsite. As Sarah Noonan, PV Team Leader Heyfield observed, without our volunteer work the assets would not have been built.

A huge amount of behind the scenes work goes into these activities. It is also quite costly for Parks not only in terms of committing staff but having tables made and buying all the materials required. Thanks to all PV staff involved. Thanks too to all of you who worked so hard with such fine spirit and put up with a few inconveniences. Post Script.

Mike Dower, Area Chief Ranger and I intend to be back at Horseyard Flat in mid December with a contractor to rehabilitate some of the rutted out tracks and put some bollards around the hut to control the traffic that turns that area to slush in the wetter months.
Greg Rose.

