



FRIENDS OF CHILTERN MT-PILOT NATIONAL PARK, Inc.

Newsletter No. 349 – May-June 2025

Website: <https://friendsofchiltern.org.au/>

*President: Tanya Thompson – Email: president@friendsofchiltern.org.au
Correspondence to Secretary: Liz Maertin – Email: secretary@friendsofchiltern.org.au
Treasurer: Neville Bartlett - Email: treasurer@friendsofchiltern.org.au
Newsletter Editor: Neville Bartlett – Email: newsletter@friendsofchiltern.org.au*

Editorial Changes

After 67 newsletters, it is time for me to step down as editor. At the last Friends' committee meeting it was suggested that we have a newsletter every two months for the time being. Anyone who is interested, or knows of someone interested in taking on the role of editor, please get in touch with one of the committee members. I am happy to discuss details of what is involved.

May and June Field Days

Friends Field Day, Saturday 3rd May 2025

It was another dry, sunny day for our May Field Day, with a good turnout despite some competition from the federal election. 11 members met at the Chiltern P.O and then divided into 2 groups. One group headed to Grasslands Block to do weed removal, the other group to do mammal box monitoring.

The Grasslands group had a very productive morning removing weeds - some Bathurst Burr and lots of Briars. With many more remaining to be removed at our June Field Day!

The mammal box group was also busy, checking 17 boxes in total at Bartley's Block; Old Cemetery Rd and Grasslands. Of the 17 boxes checked 5 were occupied with gliders. 3 out 5 boxes at Grasslands were occupied, compared with 5 out 5 last year.

The groups came together for a relaxed morning tea at Grasslands Block.

Thank you to all who participated, we look forward to seeing you at our 1st June Field Day.

Liz Maertin – Secretary.

Friends Field Day, Sunday 1st June 2025

Nine members met on the first day of winter for our June Field Day. It was a chilly start but turned into a beautiful and sunny morning. The group divided, 6 of us went to Grasslands and attacked the Briars with mattocks. We removed all the small ones (that we could find), and cut and bagged all the hips from the larger bushes.

Three headed to the All Nations/Lancashire Gap Rd areas to check 10 mammal boxes. Mick reported the following results: 5 had just leaves, 2 had gliders, probably squirrels (one pair were in a Tuan nest), 2 were unoccupied Tuan nests and one had an uncooperative Tuan, sound asleep.



L-R: Gliders in Tuan nest; Tuan nest; and Tuan hiding from us.
Photos: Mick Webster

We went on and looked at the *Grevillea floribunda* on Donchi Hill, everyone quite impressed, and mystified - how did it get there?



Photos: Mick Webster

Persistence pays

In May 2015, Friends tackled an Agave infestation in a pit just off Howlong Road. The May 2015 newsletter reports:

How lucky we were to have perfect weather for the mammoth task of reducing the Agave infestation. The task would have been extremely unpleasant under wet conditions. Eleven truly fantastic workers turned up to tackle the spread of this invasive plant Agave americana.

Happily the soil was loose and sandy which made removing the sometimes metre long underground runners relatively easy. However the removal of the big plants was another story. The combined efforts of shovels and manpower won in the end. The photos on the web speak louder than words. There were plants deep in an old mine hole and these were hacked and poisoned and time will tell how successful we have been. Meanwhile there are three huge piles to be dealt with.



Photos: Eileen Collins

Native to Mexico it is reputed to take about seven years to flower. However it obviously does not need to seed to spread as it does so by sending out underground shoots which root at nodes and send up a new plants. This site will need to be monitored for a few years for regrowth.

Every so often someone checks the site to ensure that the Agave does not rebound. Even after 10 years, Mick found some plants and removed them.



Photo: Mick Webster

Ranger's Report – Scott Cunningham

There have been a couple of changes to Parks Victoria with the appointment of new board members and chair together with a new CEO, Lee Meizis, previously the CEO for the Environment Protection Agency.

At a local level we have replaced the damaged perspex covering interpretive signage at both Honeyeater and Woolshed visitor sites. With the recent rains we are now able to grade and maintain some roads, this will be completed in the next few weeks.

Recruitment has begun to fill one vacant ranger role, hopefully to begin in the new financial year. Rubbish continues to be an issue, thanks to the volunteers that have provided information, we'll continue to remove as soon as we can. Planned burns have not progressed due to exceptionally dry weather and will be rescheduled.

The first swift parrot / regent survey was completed with a number of swift parrots sighted and a great attendance of volunteers.

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Rainfall: April 2025: 6 mm. Total year-to-date 2025 to the end of April: 115 mm. The driest start to the year since 2019. The corresponding total up to the end of April 2024 was 154 mm.

May 2025: 36 mm. Total year-to-date 2025 to the end of May: 151 mm. The corresponding total up to the end of May 2024 was 194 mm.

The average annual rainfall for Chiltern is 689 mm.
Data supplied by Mick Webster.

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NEXT FEW FIELD DAYS

Saturday 5th July 2025: Mt Ochertyre Reserve

Sunday 3rd August 2025: Revegetation work (subject to sufficient rainfall)

Saturday 6th September: AGM.

Secretary Liz Maertin will send out details for each of the days.

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Field day dates for the remainder of 2025 and 2026

For 2025: Saturday 5th July, Sunday 3rd August, Saturday 6th September, Sunday 5th October, Saturday 1st November and Sunday 7th December 2025.

For 2026: Sunday 1st February, Saturday 7th March, Sunday 5th April, Saturday 2nd May, Sunday 7th June, Saturday 4th July, Sunday 2nd August, Saturday 5th September, Sunday 4th October, Saturday 7th November and Sunday 6th December 2025.

Rule of Thumb: For even months, the field day is held on the first Sunday of the month and for odd months, it is held on the first Saturday of the month.

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Subscriptions for 2025-26 are due 30th June 2025. See details and form below.

2025-2026 Membership - Friends of Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park Inc.

Cost: \$20 (this covers the whole family and includes newsletters for 12 months).

RENEWING your membership? IF ANY of your details have changed in the last few years, please update as below & send to Liz Maartin

Email: secretary@friendsofchiltern.org.au **OR**

Text a photo of the completed form: 0423 406 858 **OR**

Post: 13 Brick Kiln Rd, Chiltern VIC 3683

Name:

Telephone:

Email: Receipt required: Yes / No

Address:..... Postcode:

NEW MEMBER? Please complete your details below and send to Liz Maartin

Email: secretary@friendsofchiltern.org.au **OR**

Text a photo of the completed form: 0423 406 858 **OR**

Post: 13 Brick Kiln Rd, Chiltern VIC 3683

Name:

Telephone:.....

Email: Receipt required: Yes / No

Address:..... Postcode:

Direct deposit:

Account Name: Friends of Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park

Bank: WAW Credit Union Co-operative Ltd (Cuscal Limited)

BSB number: 803070

Account number: 81167

Please add your **FULL NAME** to the transaction in 'Description/Reference'.

To arrange payment in cash:

Contact Liz Maartin.

0423 406 858

OR

secretary@friendsofchiltern.org.au