



Department of Sustainability and Environment

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Dear

OTWAY FMA WOOD UTILISATION PLAN (2007/08)

Thank you for your input regarding the Otway FMA Wood Utilisation Plan (2007/08).

A total of twenty two submissions were received from stakeholders regarding the Otway WUP. Stakeholders who made a submission were invited to a meeting with the Department to discuss issues raised during the public comment period. Following this meeting, the Department prepared a consolidated response to the issues raised (please see attached document 'Otway Wood Utilisation Plan 2007/08 Report').

The Otway FMA Wood Utilisation Plan has now been approved by DSE's Regional Director South West. Harvesting operations are planned to commence in early November 2007.

Please contact Stephanie Ryan on 52366204 if you require further information in relation to this issue.

Yours sincerely

Jon Rofe

District Coordinator Otways



Otway FMA Wood Utilisation Plan 2007/08 Report

Wood Utilisation Plan Development Process (background information)

The following steps were undertaken in compiling the 2007/08 Otway FMA Wood Utilisation Plan (WUP):

➤ Coupe Identification

Coupes were identified in accordance with the Code of Forest Practices, Otway Forest Management Plan, the West Victoria RFA, the DSE Wood Utilisation Planning Guidelines and the Victorian Government Response to the Victorian Environment Assessment Council's Angahook Otway Investigation Final Report.

➤ Consultation

Scientific and technical advice was sought from DSE, Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Parks Victoria, and Aboriginal Affairs Victoria on a range of issues including cultural, soils, water, fire, biodiversity.

A public notice was advertised in Geelong Advertiser, Colac Herald, Warrnambool Standard, Melbourne Age and Herald Sun and The Echo newspapers advising that a proposed WUP had been prepared and was now available for public comment.

Letters were sent to key stakeholder groups, organisations and individuals, including relevant Water and Catchment Management Authorities, Municipalities and Aboriginal communities.

Twenty-two submissions were received, including four late submissions. A stakeholder meeting was held to discuss the issues and concerns raised in the submissions.

The Government previously announced that timber harvesting for sawlogs and residual logs will cease in June 2008 in the Otway Forest Park. The Government has a commitment to supply sawlogs and residual logs to licence holders in 2007/08.

➤ Amendments to the WUP following Public Consultation

A number of amendments were made to the WUP prior to approval. In summary, twelve coupes (West Watsons, Colbendo, Rappa, Alker, Chapple Ck, Chapple South Branch, Holywater Creek, Holywater South, Water Point, Parnevok, Roadknight and Charleys Creek South) were transferred from the main schedule to the contingency list. The contingency list is still available for harvest in 2007/08, however it will only be used to meet licence commitments if all other options have been exhausted.

➤ Approval

The final WUP has been approved by the Regional Director, South West Region, DSE.

The remainder of this document addresses issues raised in community and industry responses to the Proposed 2007/08 Otway Wood Utilisation Plan. It summarises the concerns raised and outlines DSE's responses.

Licence Commitments

Mixed species licence commitment is 13,600 m3 nett.

Planned mixed species intake from Otways for 2007/08 is 12,000 m3 nett.

Ash license commitment is 6,100 m3 nett (with minimum of 4,880 m3 nett Mt Ash).

There will be minimal Mt Ash supplied from Otways in 2007/08 due to lack of available resource.

Cobden Lavers Hill Road

Concern was expressed re harvesting of the Rappa, Chapple South Branch and Chapple Creek coupes on the Cobden Lavers Hill Road.

These coupes have been transferred to the contingency list from the main schedule.

Mt McKenzie Track – Alker coupe

Concern was raised about the impact of the Alker coupe on tourism.

This coupe has been transferred from the main schedule to the contingency list.

Holywater Block

Concern was raised regarding coupes located in the Holywater Block.

To alleviate these concerns, four of the seven planned coupes in the Holywater Block were transferred to the contingency list. These coupes are Holywater Creek, Holywater South, Water Point and West Watsons.

Charleys Creek South Coupe

Concern was raised about this coupes' location within SMZ.

The Charleys Creek South coupe has been transferred to the contingency list.

Colbendo Coupe

Concern was raised about the impact of the Colbendo coupe on tourism.

This coupe has been transferred from the main schedule to the contingency list.

Amaki and Parnevok Coupes

Suggestion made to not harvest one of these coupes to address coupe concentration concern and maintain links North and South of Gellibrand River.

Suggestion adopted and Parnevok coupe has been transferred to the contingency list.

Roadknight Coupe

Concern raised about impact on Roadknight Creek road

This coupe has been transferred to the contingency list.

Vamanoc Coupe

Concern was raised about the removal of forest produce via the Lavers Hill Cobden Road.

All forest produce from the Vamanoc coupe will be removed via private property behind Crowes fire tower and along the Great Ocean Road towards Lavers Hill. It will not travel along the Lavers Hill Cobden Road.

Asplin Creek Track

Concern about road works and harvesting in this area generally, including the protection of SPZ's.

All coupes in this area were retained on the WUP. Harvesting operations exclude SPZ from operations in accordance with the Code of Forest Practices.

Waterways and Domestic Water Catchments

Concern was expressed about timber harvesting within domestic water supply catchments.

The 2007/08 WUP contains no planned harvesting operations in Geelong's water catchments. The WUP does contain planned harvesting operations in parts of Warrnambool's water catchments. All planned harvesting operations will be conducted in accordance with the Code of Forest Practices and Otway Forest Management Plan. As part of the public consultation process, Barwon Water, Wannon Water and the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority received copies of the WUP and were invited to make submissions. Ongoing discussions will occur between the Department and these agencies to ensure water resource values are appropriately protected.

Protection of Biodiversity Values

Concern was raised that a variety of biodiversity values were not adequately protected.

Further to areas already reserved under the Otway Forest Management Plan, the West Victoria Regional Forest Agreement created a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative reserve system designed to protect biodiversity and other values. VEAC considered the protection of biodiversity in recommending the creation of the Great Otway National Park which increases the areas reserved for the protection of these values.

Aerial Use of Chemicals in Domestic Water Catchments

Concern was raised about the use of aerial spraying in domestic water catchments.

DSE does not undertake aerial spraying in relation to timber harvesting operations on public land in the Otways.

Map

Concern was raised at the stakeholder meeting that the map had insufficient detail regarding SPZs.

SPZs will not be displayed on the Overview Map as this makes the map difficult to read. SPZs still apply and are shown on individual coupe maps.