NEWSLETTER, Jan 2001

p.o.box 428, daylesford, 3460
ph/fax: 5348-1748

Meeting Schedule 2001 Evening meetings 7.30pm

Tues 16th Oct	AGM, Daylesford Neighbourhood House
Tues 6th Nov	Powerhouse Art Space, Daylesford
Tues 4th Dec	Powerhouse Art Space, Daylesford
January, 2002	No Meeting
Tues 5th Feb	Powerhouse Art Space, Daylesford
Tues 5th March	Community Hall, Blackwood
Tues 2nd April	Powerhouse Art Space, Daylesford
Tues 7th May	Powerhouse Art Space, Daylesford
Tues 4th June	Powerhouse Art Space, Daylesford
Tues 2nd July	Community Hall, Blackwood
Tues 6th Aug	Powerhouse Art Space, Daylesford

Powerhouse Art Space: 9 Vincent St, Daylesford

Please ring before meeting to check scheduling

WFS COMMITTEE

President - Tim Anderson

Treasurer - Peter O'Mara

Secretary - Hugh Burnham

Committee Members - Loris Duclos

John Endacott

Emma Kosh

Jennifer McCulloch

Maryanne Faulks

Your Membership Status

According to our records the following is our understanding of your membership. If your records indicate ortherwise, or your address label is incorrect, please let us know so that we can update our lists.

LAST PAID / /
(date)

NOW DUE
PAID UP UNTIL
/ / (date)

We are continually amazed and gratified by the generosity of members and supporters of WFS. If you have previously donated money in addition your membership fees, please accept our grateful thanks. We continue to rely on your support to maintain our campaign.

Membership renewal forms are located inside the back page of this newsletter.

Wombat Forest Society

P.O.Box 428 Daylesford, 3460

ph/fax: 03 5348-1748

Incorporation No: ACN-A0029445N

Jacinta Ludeman – Forestry Victoria - Senior Forester Midlands FMA - DNRE
Peter Keppel - DNRE
Andrew Maclean - DNRE

Re Babbington Hill logging schedule and silvicultural harvesting method - Bullarto

In your letter dated 18th December 2000 from DNRE Senior Forester Jacinta Ludeman to Gary McIntosh, DNRE agreed that Babbington Hill is in mid-range view of 'designated high sensitivity tourist routes' and therefore falls under a different harvesting prescription.

The management plan states that logging coupes on Babbington Hill should be shaped, positioned and timed to minimise their visual impact. Harvesting should only be subtly apparent two years after operations are completed even though alterations in the short term may be visible.

This is a very different reality to the virtually clearfelled northern, eastern and western faces of Babbington Hill which are an atrocity to the public eye and a total disgrace to past DNRE forest management. Failed regeneration years after harvest has only exacerbated the problem. Obviously you cannot clearfell a forest in two cuts as occurs in the rest of the forest and expect it to be only subtly apparent two years after harvest.

To date a significant portion of the southern face of Babbington Hill has not been harvested and this is closest to and in full view of the busy Daylesford/Trentham Rd, the designated high sensitivity tourist route that affects Babbington Hill. Harvesting this area of forest should be scheduled AFTER adjacent clearfelled areas have successfully regenerated and grown to a substantial height if the Management Plan is to be followed, that is logging coupes timed to minimise visual impact.

One would expect that no further logging should take place on Babbington Hill for at least 15years allowing time for adjacent clearfelled areas to both regenerate and then to attain a reasonable canopy height. When harvesting does re-commence a 'selective thinning' silvicultural harvesting method or similar should be employed so as to comply with the Management Plan and only be subtly apparent two years after harvest, thus minimising the visual impact.

A silvicultural harvesting method similar to shelterwood with some rows of trees left (as suggested by your Dept) would not be at all suitable as Babbington Hill is viewed from both an East/West direction when approaching from Little Hampton and then a North/South direction when passing Lyonville. The size, adjacency, position as well as timing of such coupes all need to be thoroughly addressed to MINIMISE visual impact.

It should also be noted that this remaining area of forest on the southern side of Babbington Hill is highly valuable as habitat for much of the wildlife that lives on and around Babbington Hill as so much of the hill has already been cleared.

Please contact the three undersigned well in advance of any proposed harvesting on Babbington Hill to thoroughly discuss the above issues that have been raised and are supported by the community at large. At this forum about Babbington Hill we would like to discuss:
Timing of logging coupes
Silvicultural method to be employed
Position/Adjacency of coupes
Coupe size
Past breaches

Arrangement of this discussion forum at your earliest convenience would be appreciated. It may also be beneficial if this occured on site. The outcomes we would seek from this forum would be assurances that this area will be sustainably harvested with proper consideration of ALL forest values following the Midlands Forest Management Plan. Industry will still have access to the full resource of sawlogs and woodchips in this area over time.

We hope that an understanding and agreement can be reached in accordance with current DNRE forest management perscriptions to avoid protracted difficulties.

Yours Sincerely

Tim Anderson WFS

Peter OMara WFS

18th May, 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

I writing regarding our failure to follow the correct incorporation procedures over the last two financial years. Due to over committments of the Wombat Forest Society committee members, we have failed to hold annual general meetings for the last two years. Obviously, our breach could seriously jeopardise our incorporation qualifications but we are hoping that your office will look upon our oversight in relation to our important and unpaid community work. The Wombat Forest Society has called an Annual General Meeting in August to present our audited accounts for the last two years. Could you please notify us of any action sanctioned upon us by your office.

Regards,

Peter O'Mara
Treasurer
Wombat Forest Society
ph: 5348-1154

and finally.....

The Wombat Forest will be running a couple of community spaces in each newsletter for members with environmentally friendly businesses to advertise (free of charge) or for other local campaign information. Please call or send into our office any such details.

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY NEWSLETTER, May 2000

p.o.box 428, daylesford, 3460
ph/fax: 5348-1748

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY PHONE 5348-1154

Meeting Schedule Evening meetings 7.30pm

Fri May 5-7	National Forest Summit Moruya, N.S.W
Tues May16	Powerhouse Vincent St Daylesford
Sun May 28	WVFPN Meeting, Camperdown
Tues May 30	Powerhouse Vincent St Daylesford
Wed June 14	Powerhouse Vincent St Daylesford (Field Guide)
Sun June 25	Wombat Forest Tour (Booking Required)
Tues June 27	Blackwood Community Hall, Blackwood
Tues July 4	Powerhouse Vincent St Daylesford
Tues July 18	Powerhouse Vincent St Daylesford
Tues Aug 1	Powerhouse Vincent St Daylesford
Tues Aug15	Powerhouse Vincent St Daylesford (AGM)
Tues Aug29	Powerhouse Vincent St Daylesford

WFS COMMITTEE
President - Tim Anderson 5348-1141
Treasurer - Peter O'Mara 5348-1154
Secretary - Madeleine Bodenham 5348-1516
Commitee Members - Loris Duclos 5156-0922
John Endacott 5345-7570
Henk Bak 5424-1702
Hugh Burnham 5348-3617

Your Membership Status

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Timber Industry and its Cast of a Thousand Faces

The recent timber industry incarnation, the deceptively named Regional Forest Agreement and Community Coalition (Midland Express, Oct 12) has one vital missing ingredient, the community. Like their bogus environment group, the Forest Protection Society, the local timber industry has once again attempted to "greenwash" themselves within the RFA process and local community with nothing more than industralised propaganda. If Mr Geoff Proctor, resources manager for Black Forests Timbers, believes that the forest is well managed and sustainable, then can we assured that he will not avail himself to RFA industry compensation if the agreement proves otherwise? The Wombat Forest Society think not! The real truth is that while the timber industry continually reinvents their public front, the Wombat Forest is being logged (not harvested) at an unsustainable rate. Surely, the local community are too intelligent to believe such blatant misrepresentation by a fat bellied timber industry clutching at a diminishing supply of straws. Or is that native trees?

The Wombat Forest Society & A Labour Government

The recent shock State election result has some positives for the Wombat Forest campaign although it will be some time before we are able to accurately gauge the Labour Government's environmental credentials. During the State election, the Wombat Forest Society , in keeping with its apolitical approach, availed itself to all major political players, especially those contesting the seat of Gisborne. All three major Gisborne candidates, Joanne Duncan (Labour), Rob Knowles (Liberal) and Deb Dunne (Independent) were taken on tours into the Wombat Forest by WFS committee members and walked away with the same collective disbelief. Both Joanne Duncan and Deb Dunn attended all the Wombat Forest Society's RFA meetings showing an informed and committed approach to local forest issues. Obviously, Rob Knowles didn't bother and know finds himself sitting at home counting his parliamentary payout. The other Wombat Forest electorate, Ballarat East, failed to focus on local forest issues although Geoff Howard (Labour) did keep in touch and is now keen to be briefed on Wombat Forest issues. As history now has it, the Australian Labour Party won both the Gisborne and all Ballarat seats. Joanne Duncan (Gisborne) had a strong emphasis on forest sustainability and an extension of the RFA process within her campaign and was duly awarded the prize scalp of Health Minister and Kennett buddy, Mr Rob Knowles. Post election, Joanne Duncan has renewed her commitment to the Wombat Forest, especially an extension to the RFA timetabling. Joanne is extremely keen to maintain a working relationship with the Wombat Forest Society. The Wombat Forest Society has also been contacted by Geoff Howard (Ballarat East) and we will be meeting with all other Ballarat members over the next month. Geoff Howard has recently been appointed Parliamentary Secretary fo the Environment. The new Environment and Conservation Minister, Sherryl Garbutt is well aware of the problems of the Wombat Forest from her time in opposition and will also be attending these meetings. In "The Age" (4/10), Ms Garbutt announced that the Wombat Forest will be used as a pilot program for International Forest Stewardship Council standards for sustainable timber production to be tested. She also promised a more, open consultative approach to negotiating the West RFA and flagged a new transparency within the DNRE. Obviously, these are all important initiatives and the result of heavy lobbying by the Wombat Forest Society. The Wombat Forest Society will also be pushing for a Parliamentary Inquiry into DNRE and its relationship with timber and woodchipping interests. The Wombat Forest Society says goodbye to the retiring Dick DeFEgely (Ballarat) who showed himself to be a responsive local member on Wombat Forest issues. We hope that our newly elected local members continue to provide a voice for non-timber forest value within the Wombat Forest. As for Marie Tehan, outgoing Environment & Conservation Minister, it's good riddance and thanks for nothing.

Western Victorian Forest Protection Network Press Release 10th October, 1999

The Western Victorian Forest Protection Network, initiated to provide a networked community voice for the West Victorian Regional Forest Agreement, now has twenty member groups. The WVFPN have recently lobbied both State and Federal governments and agencies expressing detailed concerns regarding the current management and deadlines of the agreement process. Following a recent meeting (3rd October) held in Camperdown, attended by all member groups from across the West region and interested representation by the Wilderness Society, Friends of the Earth and Environment Victoria, a provision of shared concerns and stuctural demands was collectively drafted and sent to all major political parties (State & Federal) and the appropriate government agencies involved in the RFA process, DNRE and the National Forest Task Force.

The WVFPN member groups believe that the definition of the West region as one entity is preventing proper analysis of the many differing forest values. The Comprehensive Regional Assessment report, part of which was released in July as a status document, has failed to provide non-timber forest interest groups with much confidence due to an unbalanced approach to other relative forest values (ie.tourism, water catchment, beekeeping) and contains severe qualitive shortcomings. Also, the WVFPN believe that the RFA process is being driven by the Forestry Division of the DNRE which appears too closely aligned to timber and woodchipping interests. In fact, the CRA report document included DNRE staff members in the timber industry employment data. Furthermore, the release and public consultation of the CRA report was mostly unprofessional and lacking any strategic guideline. The RFA process has delibrately excluded the City of Geelong, the regions largest population centre, despite its vital interest in forest management issues related to maintaining tourism and water values.

The WVFPN letter has demanded that the RFA process be extended for one year beyond the current December 31st deadline to enable adequate research to be completed and appropriate community consultation to occur. An extension of this deadline has already been supported by the Victorian Association of Forest Industries, the Forestry Divsion of the Construction, Mining, Forestry and Energy Union and now other key stakeholders in the Gippsland RFA, the only other remaining unsigned Regional Forest Agreement on Australia. Any new research within this extension must provide a comprehensive assessment of non-timber values, including water catchment, tourism, biodiversity, plantation and other non-destructive forest activities such as beekeeping and recreational fishing. The extension should contain appropriate provision of applying ‘interim protection’ to areas indentified in the CRA report as being deficient in Reserve levels in each vegetation class and any new areas of important community forest value. The WVFPN member groups want DNRE to be excluded from the management of the West Victorian RFA and an independant committee, including community stakeholder representatives, to oversee the detailed research.
If these demands are not met, then the member groups of the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network will seriously consider withdrawing from the West Victoria RFA process.

The WVFPN now awaits a reply from all concerned parties.

Written by Peter O’Mara
Community Liasion Officer
Western Victorian Forest Protection Network

WVFPN MEMBER GROUPS

Wombat Forest Society	Otways Ranges Environment Network
ANGAIR	Enfield Forest Alliance
Actively Conserving Trentham	Daylesford Walking Group
Portland Field Naturalists	Hamilton Field Naturalists
South West Environment Action Group	Friends of the Lerdederg
Ballarat Field Naturalists	Dhuart Warrong Elders Coorporation
Victorain Apiarists Association	Enviro West
Apollo Bay Landcare Group	Friends of Bannockburn Bush
Geelong Field Naturalists	Golden Plains Tourism Association
Break'O'Day Forest Environment Group	Barwon Biodiversity Watch

THE WOODMAN Linda Zibell

A glimpse
of his sinewed, stick-insect body
in the forest:
the sapling legs rooted to earth,
his trunk, (the erect torso),
the branched arms,
that stretch.
Twig-fingered hands
grasp the axe...

(just a notion)

With each thud of metal upon wood,
with each chop,
has tree impacted on him in return?

Sap for blood,
to the heartwood.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
THE ADVOCATE
13th September, 1999

Dear Editor

The recent images of Jeff Kennett strolling the newly manicured lawns of Lake Daylesford launching the Coalition's tourism policy must have bought a proud tear to all local tourism operator's eyes. Well consider this, not far away, in the political unknown of our own backyard, the Wombat Forest is being unsustainably logged like some disposable tree factory. Does any government care? Or tourist operator? I think not. The reality is that neither political party, Dumb & Dumber, have bothered to recognise the unsustainable destruction of our local forest as an important local election issue despite 500 people attending public Regional Forest Agreement meetings over the last month in Daylesford. The Wombat Forest is not some glossy tourist brochure that can be thrown away after a getaway weekend. The blindeyed prostration to our Tourism God makes me sick. We live in greedy times indeed.

Peter O'Mara
1 Second Street
Hepburn Springs
ph: 5348-1154

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY
PRESS RELEASE
19th August, 1999

Subject: Regional Forest Agreement
Community Information Night
August 25th, 1999
Blackwood Mechanics Hall

The Wombat Forest Society will be holding a Regional Forest Agreement public meeting at the Blackwood Mechanics Hall on Wednesday, 25th August, 1999 beginning at 7.30pm. The meeting will focus on the West Region RFA, which will decide how local forests, including the Wombat and Cobaw Ranges, will be managed for the next 20years. The meeting will represented by Tim Anderson (Wombat Forest Society), Geoff Proctor (Local Industry), Michael O'Connor (Construction, Mining, Forestry, and Energy Union), Ian Miles (RFA Victoria) and Marcus Ward (Macedon Ranges Conservation Society) as to provide balanced community information into the complexities of the forest debate. All speakers will be provided equal time to express their viewpoint of the RFA process and the recently released Comprehensive Regional Assessment report. The CRA report looks at the economic, environmental, social and cultural uses of our local forests, including the Cobaw Ranges and Wombat Forests and provides the information base for any final RFA agreement. The Blackwood RFA meeting will also provide the local ommunity with opportunity to participate with questions and comments from the floor. All local State candidates, including Rob Knowles, have been invited to attend this important forest meeting. Supper will be provided by the Blackwood CFA.

"The Wombat Forest Society have an ongoing committment to retaining conservation values for our local forests, however we believe that it is vital that the community is provided with viewpoint from all sides of the argument. Although we have serious concerns about sustainability and water catchment values, we believe also in local industry and jobs. A meeting of conversation, industry, union and government viewpoint is

unique to anywhere in Australia and reflective of the open dialogue and participation of the local debate. The Wombat Forest Society encourage anyone interested in the future of our local forest to come along."

Further comment can be sought by Geoff Proctor (Timber Industry)
ph: 0418 354 488
Ian Miles (RFA Victoria)
ph: 9637-8405
Michael O'Connor (CMFEU)
ph: 9438-1888

Dear Editor

Could we please place this advertisement regarding the meeting in the next edition of your newspaper. Ring me on 5348-1154 or 0419 008 954 for further detail.

Cheers

Peter O'Mara
Wombat Forest Society

wombat forest society
p.o. box 428, daylesford 3460

To Bob Brown

From: Wombat Forest Society
P.O. Box 428
Daylesford, 3460

Dear Mr Brown,

We are writing to request a formal meeting with you during our next lobbying in Canberra on 21st June, 1999. Our President, Tim Anderson and Water Officer, Loris Duclos with be visiting various Government officers during this visit looking at sustainability and catchment problems in the Wombat Forest. The Wombat Forest Society runs a unique campaign in which we maximise our impact through open and detailed dialogue with local sawmill operators and government departments. This approach has seen the signing of a joint submission, by both the Wombat Forest Society and local sawmillers, to the State Government detailing our shared concerns. More recently, we jointly held a Wombat Forest Field day with DNRE and local sawmillers with 120 people from all sides of the argument involved. Our participation was recognition of valued involvement and saw the Wombat Forest Society give a detailed presentation on our sustainability report (see attached) and various onsite presentations out in the forest looking at regeneration, coupe management, sustainability, soil and water. The Wombat Forest have also facilitated meetings with conservationists and sawmillers in the Otways area and Gippsland. We believe that the future of our forests requires this approach (amongst others) and would value the opportunity to share this with you.
We look forward to a positive reply to our request.

Peter O'Mara
Wombat Forest Society
ph: (03) 5348-1154

Womat Forest Society
p.o.box 428 daylesford

To:Alan Grant
AFFA
GPO Box 858
Canberra 2601

From: Wombat Forest Society
P.O.Box 428
Daylesford, 3461

Dear Alan

I am writing about the possible extension of our RFA participation funding for the Western Victoria region. My request involves monies given to the Wombat Forest Society ($4000) and the Western Victoria Forest Protection Network ($4000) for which I am the appointed treasurer of both. Unfortunately, the RFA process in Victoria, ours being the last, is taking longer to complete than indicated. Already, the North-Eastern RFA's should have been signed off three weeks ago but hasn't. Obviously, this has set our process back as we have to wait for this completion to get the information required as to set up our corresponding workshops. We are asking for a three month extension on the 31st August deadline currently signed for. I have already spoken to Catherine Masters (Forest Task Force) who indicated that this extension proposition would most likely be looked upon favourably given the particular circumstance and delays. We hope that you also consider our request in a positive light as we are still dedicated to an appropriate RFA outcome for the Western region of Victoria. Call me any time about this. Thank-you.

Peter O'Mara
Wombat Forest Society
ph: (03) 5348-1154

wombat forest society
p.o.box 428 daylesford, 3460

13th June,1999

dear

Just a short note of thank-you for your valued contribution to the Wombat Forest Society fundraising effort during the Swiss Italian Festa. Despite the unfortunate weather, we still raised about $350 and much needed community profile. The next six months are possibly the most important in our recent campaigning, so please keep yourselves aware of our movements. The Wombat Forest needs everyone's committment.

Thank-you once again.

Wombat Forest Society
ph: 5348-1154

wombat forest society
p.o.box 428, daylesford 3460

To: Michael Ronaldson (MHR)
5 Lydiard Street (North)
Ballarat, 3350

From: Wombat Forest Society
P.O.Box 428
Daylesford, 3460

Dear Editor

A recent article in The Age (10/6) has once again shown up the sustainability problems in the Wombat Forest. Recently, I attended a Field Day in the Wombat Forest involving conservation groups, local timber industry and DNRE. The day was highly professional and informative. Once again, it was only the Wombat Forest Society that showed adequately detailed analysis of the Wombat Forest. It is unfortunate that it takes the unpaid time and effort of passionate members of our community to alert us to the rather miserable state of our forest and water. Without this dedication, how easily would it be that our most precious resources be frittered away. Local DNRE staff, although interested, change jobs/area, move away, or have other agendas to follow and now it appears that the local timber industry are now changing position to secure possible RFA considerations. Who really does care? I can only hope that the Wombat Forest analysis prepared by Tim Anderson is properly considered, but I serious doubt it. I know of his

personal dedication and sincerity in trying to find the best compromise for our forest and water. Without such thoroughly researched reports over long periods we would all be the poorer.

ATTENTION: The Advocate

Dear Editor

The Wombat Forest continues to be logged at brutal rates despite local conservation efforts to provide scientific and visionary argument of the unsustainability of the forest resource. In mid-September, 1998, local sawmillers signed a shared submission with the Wombat Forest Society indicating the immediate and long term problems within the forest. What has happened since? Well, surprise, surprise, the chairman of the sawmiller's collective, the Central Victorian Forestry Company, Mr Geoff Proctor, now says that the sustainabilty of the Wombat Forest is no longer a problem. Have the trees suddenly grown in eight months? I think not. I ask Mr Proctor and his sawmillers collective to provide detailed analysis to back up your sustainability projections. The Wombat Forest Society has tired of your double sided approach toward our valuable forest resource. Unfortunately, money does grow on trees, but for how long? We believe that you owe this community an explanation. The Wombat Forest belongs to us all.

RFA Concerns - Dhuart Wurrong Elders Corporation

c/- Sandra Onus 82 Garden Street, Portland, 3305

* removal of environment and heritage protection considerations - namely ATT Protection Act, 1984

* the forest resource cannot be viewed alone when actually it forms just one part of Commonwealth environmental legislation

* any legislation/agreement should encompass
    - Australian Heritage Act, 1976
    - World Heritage Properties Conservation Act, 1985
    - National Parks & Wildlife Conservation Act
    - Endangered Species Act

* protection and maintenance of indigenous lands and cultural heritage

* can the Commonwealth properly delegate responsibility of environmental and heritage considerations and still meet obligations under international laws?

* the moral upkeep of treaty obligations

* why should the timber industry be exempt from environmental impact statements?

* impact of RFA on Native Title considerations

* real involvement of local aboriginal groups in assessment process, workshopping and agreement outcomes

Portland Field Naturalists Club Inc (P.O.Box 471, Portland, 3305)

Doug Phillips (Conservation Officer)

The following subject areas would be of most interest to be discussed with Federal R.F.A. representatives & representatives of the Portland Field Naturalists Club

1. Hollow bearing trees- closer ongoing scrutiny required and adequate retention perscriptions

2. Maximisation of the reserve system in the Portland Forest Management Area above and beyond current reserve system. Already recognised local catchment authorities strategies.

3. Threatened Species - Powerful Owl, Masked Owl etc...adequate Special Protection provisions

4. Broad Vegetation Types (BVT's) & Ecological Vegetation Communities
   - defintion of which will be imposed
   - greater clarification

5. Stakeholder Participation

6. Sustainability of Forest Resource

Daylesford Walking Group

c/- Greg Morgan
RMB 4410
Currys Road
Musk, 3461

* Code requirements of filter strips for both permanent & non-permanent streams

* log extraction v's geniune environmental concerns

* habitat trees- the current provisions are inadequate

* unhealthy alliance with timber industry

* failure of regeneration burnings

* wildlife protection

* recreational considerations

HAMILTON FIELD NATURALISTS

Points for consideration at WVFPN meeting with Canberra representatives

* Yellow Gum woodland between Henty Highway and Blcak Range should be given State Park or National Park status

* Tulloch Forest area (north of Casterton-Penola Road) should have high Reserve status or special protection zoning(habitat for red-tailed Black Cockatoo)

* We support current submissions by the Wombat Forest Society, Otways Regional Environment Network and the Portland Field Naturalists

* Cobboboonee Forest deserves high reserve status due to large number of rare and endangered mammal and bird species

* We have strong reservations about the RFA process in Western Victoria for the following reasons

1. Exclusion of Box-Ironbark from the study area
2. The exclusion of plantation timber forest product from forward estimates
3. Previous RFA agreements have favoured woodchip operations

Will they ever learn??????

The Howard Government's rewriting of federal environmental protection laws is equivalent to asking Hannibal Letcher to babysit the kids. The recent article by Claire Miller (The Age 22/6) regarding the Environment Protection And Biodiversity Bill highlighted the immediate and long-term dangers that this legislation poses to enviromental protections. Many environmental safeguards, such as Environmental Impact Statements, will no longer be required, leaving our natural world vulnerable to industry outlook and greed. The new legislation, by handing greater responsibilty to State Governments, would diminish much of this and last generations hard fought protection mechanisms. We will enter a new millenium of environmental decay. Already the Federal Government has shown through the current Regional Forest Agreements that our forests are now at unsustainable whim of industry-based management practices without adequate environmental protection strategy. The woodchip is now star player and umpire of our native forests. How can anyone call this responsible legislating? Once again, the Federal Government has shown itself to possess a dollar-sized environmental capacity. The bottom line is that environmental protection has been sacrificed by economically driven policy intent. We truly live in unenlightened times.

Peter O'Mara
Wombat Forest Society
1 Second Street
Hepburn Springs

Ph: 5348-1154

VICTORIAN APIARIST ASSOCIATION INC

Resources Committee Chairman
Mr.R.(Bob).McDonald
ph: 5472-2161

RFA PROCESS & THE APICULTURAL INDUSTRY

* Our understanding is that the RFA process is an agreement between the Commonwealth and State Governments to bring security and certainity to all forest users

* The RFA Process has shown inconsistent attitude towards Apiculture Industry with conflicting information regarding Special Protection Zones

* Inadequate representation within RFA agreements of the Beekeeping Industry's Value to the Economy -

* Lack of acknowldgement within the RFA process of the use of forests for the provision of nutrition for the maintenance of population levels of bee-hives for managed honey bee pollination services to Horticultural and Agricultural industries.

* Any restriction of beekeeping activity is inconsistent with Victorian Government's ambition to develop a food export culutre. Already 40% of honey is sold on the export market.

* Industry's Survival/Viability - Apicultural Industry is dependant upon access to public land. This access will be limited by the creation of new reserves, mostly Special Protection Zones. What is the status of beekeeping in Special Protection Zones in the RFA agreement? There seems to be a conflict between Commonwealth and State. The rules seem to have changed and a new interpretation has emerged. Our access to public lands must be sustained and increased so as to retain a viable, valuable industry.

* Compensation - What industry adjustment and assistance is the Commonwealth Governmnet prepared to offer the Apicultural Industry especially considering the possible restriction to public lands?

ANGAIR

R/n A0002974W
P.O.Box 12, Anglesea, 3230

RFA Contact: Geoff Holbery-Morgan
ph: 03 5263 3111

ANGAIR's concerns regarding the Regional Forest Agreement

* Protection and maintenance of existing Park Reserves such as Angahook/Lorne Park is of prime importance. We heard rumours that these parks may be put at risk

* Without identification, mapping and protection of rare, threatened and/or endangered indigenous plants, animals & communities, the RFA process is meaningless

* The RFA process must recognise the importance of microscopic animals such as insects and other invertebrates

* Code Of Forest Practice requirements must be closely adhered to, and penalties enforced. Control mechanisms for this need to be put in place in the RFA documents

* Stream culture maintenance & protection

* Fire regimes and burning rotations can have serious effects on forest structure and habitat values

* Inclusion/ Exclusion of timber plantations within the RFA. Are newly-privatised plantations covered by the process & subsequent controls?

Retention of a greater number of habitat trees, and large, old trees which will become the habitat trees when the current ones fall

*A*CTIVELY *C*ONSERVING *T*RENTHAM
p.o. box 191
trentham, 3458

sandy scheltema
5424-1659

mark cowie
5424-1795

RFA CONCERNS

* the future management of existing logging coupes already given a DFA awaiting the RFA process

* economic impact of reduced forest resource on current and potential tourism of township

* protection of fauna within the RFA agreement, most notably the threatened Powerful Owl

* protection of native flora in the Trentham area

* adequate provision within the local Wombat Forest for recreational users (eg. Bushwalkers, birdwatchers, horseriders)

* protection of Wombat Forest within two kilometres of township

* ongoing protection of historical railway line between Daylesford and Trentham with a view to establishing a National Trust classification

* long-term sustainability of timber resource

* regeneration

* habitat trees

SOUTH WESTERN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION GROUP

gillian blair
649 Warrumyea Road
Panmure, 3265
ph: 5567-6273

RFA CONCERNS

*Logging of water catchments and high erosion risk areas _ 250 000 people dependant on this water supply & already water restrictions in Geelong - there is obviously a problem

* reduced rotation of logging coupes

* destruction of biodiverse forest

* woodchip emphasis of current logging practices

* unsustainability of forest resource & biodiversity

* economic impact of reduced forest resource on current & potential tourism

* protection of forest workers through adequate compensation & retraining opportunities

* income of tourism vs wodchips

* protection of flora/fauna within the RFA agreement for Otways and Cobboboonee Forest

* adequate provision of forest resource for recreational users

* refusal of State/Federal representatives to provide community consultation for Warrnambool and Geelong areas regarding the RFA process.

western victorian forest

protection network

p.o. box 428 daylesford
ph/fax (03) 5348 1748

dear

Please find enclosed a timetable for the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network RFA meeting with Federal/State representatives in Ballarat on Saturday, July10th. I have tried to provide each group with an opportunity to meet with the appropriate personnel in accordance to your particular RFA concerns. In some instances, a group may meet with two RFA representatives which I have indicated on the timetable. Due to the positive respone from WVFPN group, we have to do some tight scheduling. We were also hoping that all participating groups could meet at 9am at BRACE to discuss WVFPN's RFA participation and future approach beyong this meeting. This will be followed by a morning cuppa and then a RFA breifing by Ian Myles (Forest Task Force) and Tim Anderson (WVFPN). Hopefully, this will enable all groups to be better informed for their individual meetings. The Forest Task Force have generously offered to cover the considerable cost of our catered lunch for all participating members. WVFPN will provide morning tea and share amentities cost. Could each group please provide me with numbers that will be attending.

Proposed Schedule

9am-10am	WVFPN meeting
10am-10.30am	Morning Tea
10.30-11.00am	RFA Breifing (Ian Myles & Tim Anderson)
11.00-1.00pm	Individual Group Meeings (as timetable)
1.00-2.00pm	Lunch
2.00-4.00pm	Individual Group Meetings (as timetable)

Look forward to seeing you all next Saturday.

RFA MEETING
10th July, 1999
10am - 4pm
at
BRACE

Lunch provided at $10 donation
One complimentary lunch for WVFPN groups

Federal/ State RFA Personnel
Meeting: 10th July, 1999

Steve Watts
Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet
Forest Task Force
Victorian Regional Forest Agreement

Ian Miles
Manager
RFA Agreement
Victoria

Dougal Morrison
Forest Assessment Branch
Forest and Forestry Industries
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Australia

Stuart Davey
Principal Research Scientist
Scientific Advisor
Forest Task Force
Bureau Rural Science

Kylie White
Project Manager/ Forest Planner
RFA Agreement
Victoria

Julie Ramsay
Enviroment Australia
Aboriginal Liasion Officer
Cultural/Heritage Issues

Felix Schlager
Environment Australia
Project Manager
Flora/Fauna

ATTENTION: IAN MILES
FAX NO: 9637-8116

Dear Ian

Please find following

* Breif Summary Of Group Concerns

* Timetable Ammendments

Cheers,

Peter O'Mara
ph: 5348-1154

REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT

WOMBAT FOREST MEETING
AUGUST 5th, 1999

AGENDA

1. Introduction/Welcome: Peter O'Mara
(MeetingConvenor)
Tim Anderson
(Wombat Forest Society)
2. Speakers: Loris Duclos... Wombat Forest Society
*Non-Timber Values in RFA's
* DFA's
Michael O'Connor CMFEU
* Forest Workers & RFA
John Drohan VAFI
* Industry Outlook & RFA
Tim Anderson Wombat Forest Society
* RFA process
* Sustainability
Marcus Ward Macedon Ranges Conservation Society
* Community & RFA

(Each speaker given ten minutes speaking time)

3. Questions/Comments From The Floor...30 minutes

4. Motions From The Floor/Panel (if any)

5. Close Supper: Tea /Coffee, Light Refreshments

next

regional forest agreement meeting

THURSDAY AUGUST 19TH
7.30pm
DAYLESFORD TOWN HALL

COMPHRENSIVE REGIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

PUBLIC WORKSHOP

presented by
NATIONAL FOREST TASK FORCE
(department of prime minister & cabinet)
and DNRE

HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE GOVERNMENT ASSESSMENT OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTAL & HERITAGE VALUES OF THE COBAW RANGES AND WOMBAT FOREST

our forest....our future....our say

what do you want from your forest in the next 20 years???

come along and have your say

25th August, 1999

Speakers...
wombat forest society
industry
union
macedon ranges conservation society

initiated by the Wombat Forest Society

TREASURERS REPORT

The finances of the Wombat Forest Society remain solvent, but not exactly robust. The last three months has shown unprecedented financial demand due our committed involvement in the West Victorian RFA process, Fortunately, our strong membership base continues to renew memberships and provide additional donations. Recent non-renewal donations have enabled us to re-establish an office space at the Powerhouse Art Gallery at an extremelt affordable rental. Thank-you! The Wombat Forest Society does need to extend its fundraising base though if we are to remain financially bouyant. Unfortunately, the current committee members are heavily involved in the RFA campaign etc... and could do with some extra help. As we all know, money doesn't grow on trees unless you belong to the timber industry. The real truth of the matter is that dedicated WFS committee often give up their own financial position to ensure that our campaign remains financial. You can be well assured that all monies of the Wombat Forest Society are tightly monitored and frugally spent but we definitely need more of the stuff. As always, we thank you for your generous memberships and donations. Please keep them coming.

+++++++SWISS ITALIAN FESTA++++++

Wet. Wet. More Wet. The Wombat Forest fundraising effort at the annual Hepburn Springs Swiss Italian Festa was a success despite a bucketing rainfall across the whole weekend. Unfortunately, the community space and local music extravaganza had to be cancelled but we managed to fire up the barbeque and chai tea with a defiant resolve of held umbrellas, warm beanies, champagne and an enthusiastic bunch of volunteers. Despite all meterological hiccups, we managed to raise $400 and as they say 'many friends'. A special thanks to all our hardy volunteers, especially Stacey Kilpatrick (music convenor), Andrea Lindsay (vegetable pattie marvel) and Steve Futo (chai tea). I should also mention John Endacott, Rachel Judd, Tim Anderson, Chris Syme, Dale Fort, Alan Kaye and Zina for their culinary finese. Hopefully, our supportive (but unused) local musicians may be able to groove us in a future fundraising effort. The Wombat Forest Society also made a donation of
$50-00 to the Swiss Italian Festa Committee in recognition of its community work. We hope to involve ourselves again next year. Keep you posted.

Peter OMara

RFA MEETING-BALLARAT_10th JULY

The Wombat Forest Society in its membership capacity of the WVFPN organized a RFA briefing day for all participant groups within the Western RFA Region. Groups included the Otways Regional Environmental Network, Wombat Forest Society, Actively Conserving Trentham, Enfield Forest Alliance, Ballarat FNC, Portland FNC, Hamilton FNC, Victorian Apairist Association, Daylesford Walking Group, Dhuart Wurrong Elders Coroporation, ANGAIR and SWEAG. The structure of the RFA Breifing Day involved all individual groups meeting with the appropriate Commonwealth/State RFA representatives regarding issues such as biodiversity/heritage, RFA process, forest management, sustainability, other forest uses, flora/fauna and indigenous/cultural issues. Each group was provided with the opportunity to put forward their individual concerns as well as developing their own understanding of the much maligned RFA process. The Western Victorian Forest Protection Network has proven itself to be a strong lobby platform for the obvious problems that exist within our forests. On the day, the WVFPN groups showed that they are undertaking detailed and passionate campaigns on a variety of RFA issues. Although many groups, including the Wombat Forest Society, have fundamental doubts about the RFA process, we believe taht we must also have some participating role even if we may ultimately reject the RFA agreement. Obviously, the Wombat Forest Society has a strong facilitory role to play to ensure that all forest concerns/issues throughout the Western region are provided an appropriate forum. The Wombat Forest Society is committed to the protection of all forests, not only the Wombat. The RFA meeting is only the beginning of a well planned consultative process with Commonwealth/State representatives and WVFPN groups. Obviously now, the challenge is to have our many RFA concerns appropriately considered within any signed agreement. The Commonwealth/State representatives cannot say that they haven't been told. But did they listen? That is the ultimate question.

Peter O'Mara

A TRENTHAM UPRISING

Following the DNRE intention of harvesting three coupes within close proximity to the township of Trentham, the local community has come together to strongly oppose the logging. The local community believe strongly that the logging proposal will have untold effect on the natural and social ammentity that the Wombat Forest provides to the township. Following detailed lobbying by a concerned local group, now known as Actively Conserving Trentham, a deferred Forest Agreement was placed on the three coupes and is now to be considered within the RFA process. The Actively Conserving Trentham group targetted the socio-economic value of the Wombat Forest for all forest users and also the possibility of the threatened Powerful Owl inhabiting the area. A meeting was held at the Trentham Town Hall with 150 people overwhelmingly endorsing the Trentham community's postition, not only for these three coupes, but also a forest buffer zone around the township. The Wombat Forest Society has provided advisory assistance but realise the value of a community driven forest action. The Wombat Forest Society had representation at the Trentham meeting advising the local community that any campaign requires a dedicated response from everyone. The Actively Conserving Trentham group has joined the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network so that their local forest concerns can be appropriately considered within the RFA process. The Wombat Forest Society will support them in their campaign but believe that any concession gained should not be at the expense of other areas of the Wombat Forest. DNRE needs to consider Trentham community's concerns as an independant, yet intergrated, component of the Wombat Forest.

The Logggers Dream

The loggers dreamed he scaled a tree
in Wombat Forest territory;
precariously in that place
he met a big owl face to face!
And almost took a fatal fall
when startled by it's mournful:

WOO-HOO can save we Powerful Owls
in this forest of Wombat?
WOO - HOO - HOO has the people power
to save our ancient habitat?

"Not me," the startled logger said,
"And while I do not wish you dead,
I've got to earn my daily bread
and felling trees is how I'm fed."
But what - oh God - if owls are wise
in strict proportion to their size?

WOO-HOO can save we Powerful Owls
in this forest of Wombat?
WOO - HOO - HOO has the people power
to save our ancient habitat?

In fright he woke and shook his wife
Wake up wake up! The job's in strife!
The people's umpire could call foul;
who told me this? a big wise owl.
Oh what a hoot, she thought, until -
she heard it from their window sill:

WOO-HOO will save the Powerful Owls
In this forest of Wombat?
WOO - HOO - HOO has the people power
To save our ancient habitat?

WOO - HOO - **YOU** with people power
can save our ancient habitat!

WOMBAT FOREST FIELD DAY

The Wombat Forest Society, in conjunction with DNRE and the local timber industry held an extremely successful Wombat Forest Field Day on May. The Wombat Forest Field Day involved many local conservationists, local individuals, forest workers, community organizations, sawmillers and DNRE representatives with about 120 people in attendance. The meeting began at the Bullarto Community Hall with DNRE, local timber industry, forest workers union, RFA representatives and the Wombat Forest Society all making representation on forest mangement issues, water catchment values, mineral springs, industry outlook, RFA process, sustainability and future projections of the Wombat

Forest. Most importantly, WFS president, Tim Anderson, presented the Wombat Forest Society's Analysis & Critique of the Sustainable Sawlog Yield Modelling for the Midland Forest Mangement Area.. Tim Anderson, together with our water expert Loris Duclos, provided a damaging argument against the current and future projections of the modelling used for the Midlands Management Area. The Wombat Forest Society believe that the DNRE modelling is predicting average volumes that have no realistic chance of being met. The Wombat Forest will be cut out in the next 15 years. Surprisingly no-one at the meeting, including the modelling experts, could deny the analysis of the Wombat Forest Society and the community was once again told to sit back and trust the process. "We know what we are doing!!!" Sound familiar. Both Tim Anderson and Loris Duclos provided the type of analysis that we pay the responsible departments to develop. How long will it be before we can value add to the forest debate rather than continually having to fight a lame bureaucracy? How long is a length of native timber? Apparently limitless..

After the morning briefing in the hall, each Wombat Forest Field Day participant took part in a bus tour of the local Wombat Forest. Each bus stopped at four coupe sites designated to look Code of Forest Practice, Regeneration, Biodiversity and Water Issues. The 4 stops had representation from DNRE, timber industry, and the Wombat Forest Society looking at the various issues involved. Although held under uncertain and somewhat damp skies, the bus tour provided a detailed and practical focus on local forest issues. Once again, the WFS representaion showed itself to provide a well balanced and informative approach to the obvious forest management problems that exist within the Wombat Forest.

Overall, the Wombat Forest Field Day was extremely successful especially given the differing and well held viewpoints of the participants involved. The Wombat Forest Society congratulate DNRE and the local timber industry on their shared involvement but believe that unless forest management changes are soon implemented than the whole day is nothing more than community tokenism. The

Wombat Forest Society Press Release

10th August, 1999

Daylesford RFA Meeting

The Wombat Forest Regional Forest Agreement meeting organized by the Wombat Forest Society and held at the Daylesford Town Hall was attended by 180 people, following up from the recent RFA community meeting at Woodend.
"The attendance was encouraging and reflective of the increasing community concern of the state of the local Wombat Forest. The Wombat Forest Society will continue to increase participatory awareness of the RFA process and ensure that all community values are considered" says Peter O'Mara, meeting convenor.
The RFA meeting had forum representation from the Wombat Forest Society, Victorian Association of Timber Industries, Construction, Mining, Energy amd Forestry Union and the Macedon Ranges Conservation Society.
"The Wombat Forest Society, although conservation based, has an ongoing committment to real and open dialogue with all industry players. We believe that our approach is unique to anywhere in the country and will hopefully ensure an equatable outcome for all forest users within the local community."
Loris Duclos and Tim Anderson, Wombat Forest Society, expressed their concern that a rushed RFA process may inhibit the community's ability to contribute to an agreement that will adequately protect environmental considerations, including long-term sustainability and water catchment values. Tim

Anderson told the RFA meeting that the current overharvesting in the Wombat Forest will see the timber industry within the region collapse within ten years and that the sustainable yeild needs to be reduced to a realistic level by the Regional Forest Agreement. The Wombat Forest Society's detailed analysis of the current and future sustainability modelling shows that we are already cutting into the next generation of sawlog

"Everyone loses in this unsustainable scenario, including conservationists, forest workers, local communities and the timber industry. We must be committed to managing the forest resource to ensure that our children's environmental heritage is protected for the next 20 years and beyond. We need to implement sound management practices that also consider the increasing importance of the non-timber values of the Wombat Forest. No Forests. No Future."

The Wombat Forest called for the community to take back the running of our forest.

"We couldn't do a worse job than what we are presently getting from DNRE," added Tim Anderson

John Drohan, representing the Victorian Association of Timber Industries, believed that the RFA process would provide both employment and investment certainity for local industry due to a more secure resource structure. Michael O'Connor, Construction, Mining, Energy and Forest Union, expressed a similiar viewpoint, especially in regard to job security for his members. Mr O'Connor also backed calls for the community to manage the forest resource.

Finally, Marcus Ward, Macedon Ranges Conservation Society, reinforced the Wombat Forest Society's earlier remarks that a rushed RFA process would have a negative impact on the community's environmental and recreational right to the forest. He believed that the mangement of the Wombat Forest and Cobaw Ranges was being structured as to allow for possible privatisation in the future.

The RFA meeting put forward the similar motions as the recent Woodend meeting including the removal of the Cobaw Ranges, Loddon, Enfield and Wombat Forest from the RFA process and

that a moratorium be placed on all woodchip exports from these forest. The motions, although passed by the majority, were strongly opposed by the CMFEU and these members staged a walkout of the meeting after these two issues were voted upon. “Obviously, there is some differing opinion within any forest community and the Wombat Forest Society respect the right of any organization to protest their disapproval. We would be hypocritical to deny the CMFEU otherwise. The Wombat Forest Society, although holding our own position, will continue to develop relationships with all interests within the forest debate. Our real situation is whether, or not, we continue to participate in a rushed RFA process. We are unsure that removal from the process would provide our broader community with the best possible outcome for the Wombat Forest. One thing we do know is that local communities are not happy with the current state of the forests.”

Written by
Peter O’Mara
Wombat Forest Society
ph: 5348-1154

SENT TO MIDLAND EXPRESS ONLY

Wombat Forest Society
Press Release
12th August, 1999

Regional Forest Agreement Meeting: Comphrensive Regional Assessment Report Daylesford Town Hall 19th August, 1999

A Regional Forest Agreement meeting will be held at the Daylesford Town Hall on August19th beginning at 7.30pm. The meeting has been initiated by the National Forest Task Force (Commonwealth) and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (State) to provide community discussion of newly released Comphrensive Regional Assessment report. The CRA is a scientific report that looks at the economic, environmental, social & cultural uses of the forest of the West RFA including the Cobaw Ranges and Wombat Forest. Importantly, the CRA report provides the information base for the Western Victorian Regional Forest Agreement, which will decide how our local forests are used and managed for the next 20 years. Already, local community meetings, held at Daylesford, Woodend and Trentham, have expressed concerns about the current RFA process because of limited community input and response time to the Comphrensive Regional Assessment report. The local community has been asked to respond to a reduced CRA timetable so that the Regional Forest Agreement can be signed off before January 1st, so as to allow for the continued export of woodchips. Local conservation group, the Wombat Forest Society, although obviously concerned with the shortened RFA process, will be attending the CRA meeting to ensure that the

data presented within the report is reflective of the current state of our forest.

Says Peter O'Mara
Wombat Forest Society

"Already, the Wombat Forest Society's early analysis of the CRA report shows some major concerns about the data and vision provided in relation to our local forests. We cannot objectively evaluate the Regional Forest Agreement without considering the CRA report with a detailed approach. The Wombat Forest Society encourage all community members, especially those who have attended local meetings, to come along and ensure that the Forest Task Force and DNRE are providing adequate community data and vision within the CRA report. Ultimately, local communities have to demonstrate to these government agencies which manage our forests, that we are extremely concerned with the impact of any agreement that decides how our forests will be managed for the next twenty years."

Attention
Editor
Ballarat Courier

Please find enclosed our recent Press Release regarding the Regional Forest Agreement. We have been pleased with the recent coverage by your newspaper about this important forest agreement. I have included below an advertisement that we would wish to run in the Monday's Courier (30th August). If you could please advise me on the cost as soon as possible and I will forward the monies immediately

Peter O'Mara
Wombat Forest Society
P.O. Box 428
Daylesford, 3460
ph: 5348-1154

REGIONAL FOREST AGREEMENT MEETING

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY & ENFIELD FOREST ALLIANCE COMMUNITY INFORMATION NIGHT

WEDNESDAY 1st SEPTEMBER
NAPOLEONS COMMUNITY HALL
COLAC ROAD, NAPOLEONS

speakers

enfield forest alliance
wombat forest society
timber industry
union
apiarists

our forests.....our say.....our future

what do you want from your forests in the next twenty years

come along and have your say

AGENDA

1. Welcome: Peter O'Mara (Wombat Forest Society)
(Meeting Convenor)
2. Introduction: Kim Stanley Eyles
(Enfield Forest Alliance)
3. Speakers: Tim Anderson
Loris Duclos (Wombat Forest Society)
* RFA & Conservation Values
* Sustainability
CMFEU Representative
* Forest Workers & RFA
John Corrigan (Timber Industry)
* Industry Outlook & RFA
Gavin Jamieson (Victorian Apiarists Ass'n)
* Other Forest Industry & RFA
Enfield Forest Alliance
* Community Forest Values

(Each Speaker given ten Minutes speaking time)

3. Open Forum From The Floor: Questions/Comments

4. Close

5, Supper: Tea /Coffee, Light Refreshments

Wombat Forest Society
Press Release
12th August, 1999

Regional Forest Agreement Meeting:
Comphrensive Regional Assessment Report Release
Daylesford Town Hall, 19 August

The National Forest Task Force and DNRE will be holding a Regional Forest Agreement meeting on Thursday, August 19th at the Daylesford Town Hall. The RFA public meeting will focus on the recent release of the Comphrensive Regional Assessment report that provides the scientific information base for the final agreement. The CRA report looks at the economic, environmental, social and cultural uses of the forests within the West RFA, including the local Wombat Forest. Anyone interested in the regions forests is welcome to attend the public meeting to discuss the CRA report and the RFA process with the appropriate Government representatives. The West RFA is the last to be signed off in Australia, along with East Gippsland and has to be completed by the end of 1999 to meet current woodchip licensing requirements. Already, community meetings in Daylesford, Trentham and Woodend have expressed concerns over the shortened RFA process in the West Victorian region and its implications for local forest issues. Local conservation group, the Wombat Forest Society, although holding concerns about the RFA process, are encouraging all community members to attended the CRA meeting.

“The Wombat Forest Society believe that it is important that the local community attend this RFA meeting. The National Forest

Task Force and DNRE need to see that we all care about the Wombat Forest, especially in regard to non-timber values. The RFA is a 20 years agreement about the future management of our forest resource," says Peter O'Mara,Wombat Forest Society. "The time for concerned locals to become involved is now. The Wombat Forest is the most important environmental consideration of this area, including conservation, tourism, timber and water catchment values. We cannot complain about the loss of the Wombat Forest tomorrow, if we do not involve ourselves today."

Wombat Forest Society

p.o. box 38, daylesford, 3460 ph:5348-1748

Motions from the community meeting at the Daylesford Town Hall on the 5th August, 1999

Requesting a proper, thorough, transparent and independant economic analysis of catchment and ground water values in the region by the Co-operative Research Centre For Catchment Hydrology
Moved: Loris Duclos
Seconded: Marcus Ward

That theCobaw Ranges, Loddon, Enfield and Wombat Forests be left out of the RFA.
Moved: Deb Dunne
Seconded: John Endacott

That a moratorium be placed on all woodchip exports for the Cobaw Ranges, Loddon, Enfield and Wombat Forests.
Moved: Deb Dunne
Seconded: Marcus Ward

That the Cobaw Ranges, Loddon, Enfield and Wombat Forests remain in community ownership not subject to any actual or defacto corporatisation or privatisation of Victorian native forests.
Moved: Deb Dunne
Seconded: Marcus Ward

That this meeting moves a motion of no confidence in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment in its approach to sustainable harvesting of timber in the past and in the forseeable future.
Moved: Deb Dunne
Seconded: Marcus Ward

That each state candidate for the seat of East Ballarat be asked to declare their support or opposition to keeping the Cobaw Ranges, Loddon, Enfield and Wombat Forests out of the RFA; and that each municipality with land in these four State Forests be asked to declare their support or opposition to keeping these forests out of the RFA
Moved: Deb Dunne
Seconded: Marcus Ward

Wombat Forest Society

p.o. box 428 daylesford, 3460 ph/fax: 5348-1748

Dear

Please find enclosed the details of the Wombat Forest Society and Enfield Forest Alliance's Regional Forest Agreement Community Information Night to be held in Napoleons on Wednesday, 1st September, 1999. The RFA Information Night is the fourth recent meeting held by the Wombat Forest Society so that all forest stakeholders can have the opportunity to provide the local community with their viewpoint on the Regional Forest Agreement. The meeting will be represented by timber industry, union, apriculture and conservation interests and is further example of the Wombat Forest Society and the Enfield Forest Alliance's ongoing committment to providing open and balanced dialogue within local forest issues. We hope that you too will be in attendance at this meeting as elected (or perspective) representatives of this community.
Hope to see you there.

Peter O'Mara
Wombat Forest Society

Julie Donaghy
Enfield Forest Alliance

Community Consultation Concerns
West Victorian Regional Forest Agreement

* Lack of initial Federal/State committment to dialogue opportunities with Wombat Forest Society, Western Victorian Forest Protection Network, Timber Industry, Union and local communities..
ie..one representative (Ian Miles) at only one of three RFA funded Wombat Forest Society information night attended by 500 people

* No community representation on the RFA steering committee

* Initial exclusion of the City of Geelong from the consultative process

* Lack of detailed community consultative strategy and planning especially given our shortened consultation period

* Lack of meeting infrastructure and sosphication such as independant chairperson and adequate detailing of community concerns

* Indequate community coordination/facilitation

* Reluctance by DNRE/Forest Task Force to provide requested reference material and data breakdowns

* Failure to adequately inform important stakeholders of RFA process such as Water Authorities and Local Councils

* Defensive and often evasive responses to community and stakeholder concerns during CRA report meetings

* Lack of feedback from DNRE/Forest Task Force

Peter O'Mara
Community Liasion Officer
Wombat Forest Society
Western Victorian Forest Protection Network

Recent Sabotage on Dwyers Mill

The recent sabotage on Dwyers Mill, Daylesford has been strongly condoned by the Wombat Forest Society as both thoughtless and unjustified. The Dwyers Mill has long been supported by the Wombat Forest Society as a timber business of high standing as represented by our continual nomination of the sawmill for the FOE 'Good Wood' Guide. Unfortunately the local timber industry (and their new P.R. company) took upon themselves to blame the Wombat Forest Society for this unwanted vandalism because of our so-called "raising" of the emotive debate. The timber industry's mock environment group, the deceptively named "Forest Protection Society" had the cheek to accuse the Wombat Forest Society of misrepresenting the facts.Yeah right! The following comments by Debbie Mauric (Midland Express 21/9) of the Forest Protection Society that the Wombat Forest Society should take responsibility for the recent sabotage incident at Dwyers Sawmill is both ridiculously niave and defamatory. The Wombat Forest Society and, in particular, our president Mr Tim Anderson, have lobbied that our local forest debate should be conducted with shared, reasonable and intelligent dialogue between all interested stakeholders. Neglectfully, the Midland Express article failed to mention that the man charged over the sawmill incident had no alliance with any local environmental group, so any ascertain of responsibility should rest toatally with the individual involved. It would appear that the local timber industry head honchos are now looking for any opportunity to discredit the Wombat Forest Society's excellent conservation work.. Well bad luck fellas, the Wombat Forest Society has worked too hard within our local communities to have our reputation hoodwinked by such industry propanganda and accusation. Furthermore, contary to Ms Mauric's claims, the Wombat Forest Society, unlike other environment groups, are participating in the RFA process and have had timber industry representation at all their RFA funded meetings. In fact, Ms Mauric actually attended most of these herself, asking questions from the floor and even holding conversation with me afterward. So now, who is telling the porky pies? The only truth that remains is that our much loved Wombat Forest continues to be unsustainably logged.

Hepburn Springs, 3461
ph: 5348-1154

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
THE ADVOCATE
24th September, 1999

Dear Editor

The timber industry's public inference that local environmentalists should take responsibility for the recent criminal sabotage at Dwyers Mill (Advocate 22/9) is nothing more than appalling and misleading industry propaganda. The reality is that the Victorian Association of Forest Industries are circulating the exact emotive and misinformed information that they accuse local environment groups of doing. How ridiculous! The real truth is that the man charged over the sawmill damage had no alliance with any local environment group, so any ascertain of responsibility should totally rest with the individual. The Wombat Forest Society condemn such vandalism and will continue, as we have always done, to provide non-violent, intelligent and passionate community voice. The timber industry needs to seriously look at its own failed bully-boy approach. The local community are laughing at your niavely unimaginative public relations stunt. Maybe boys, it is time to grow up.

Peter O'Mara
Wombat Forest Society
1 Second Street
Hepburn Springs, 3461

A New Home

On August 15th, the Wombat Forest Society moved into an office space in the Powerhouse Art Space in Vincent Street Daylesford at a very suitable rental arrangement. The Powerhouse, founded in 1996, is primarily a contempary art space which is largely self-funded, operating on voluntary labour from resident artists and a wider group of interested people in the community. Wombat Forest Society member, Amanda Rowlands, co-founded the Powerhouse and is delighted for the WFS to be moving in. Over the last three years, the Powerhouse venue has launched many art exhibitions, community-based and individual events and performances. Many of these have had a strong environmental content such as *Recycling, The World That Ate Itself, Landscape to Land* with focus on aboriginal, recycling, uranium mining, forest and sustainability issues. The Wombat Forest Society seems to have found a spiritual and community home. We are hoping that the new centrally located office space will provide for more community input into our increasingly time consuming campaign. The Wombat Forest Society computer will be kept at the Powerhouse for community use as well as a library and facsmilie facility. Also, the Wombat Forest Society will soon be going on-line. For the momnet, the phone wil remain at Tim Anderson's house and probably until the RFA agreement is signed. We might even allow him to get back on with his life then! But then, maybe not. So for now, and hopefully for some time into the future, the Daylesford Powerhouse is the home of the Wombat Forest Society. Please call in and have a chat or just enjoy yourself to look at whatever exhibition is on offer.

RFA UPDATE

The Wombat Forest Society is working on overdrive, fuelled by the continued mismangement of our local forests. The long winter months have seen our campaign travel far and wide, holding many community and stakeholder meetings and continually keeping the DNRE and timber interests accountable for the sustainability problems that exist within the Wombat Forest. Probably more importantly, the Wombat Forest Society, through its strong participatory role within the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network has helped to invigorate a collective non-timber voice across the western region of Victoria.The WVFPN has grown into a network of 20 member groups with a combined membership of 10,000 people, ranging from the radical to the conservative. For the first time, the RFA process is being scrutinised by the non-timber community and the State/Federal bureaucracy is struggling. Our most recent meeting, held in Camperdown, overwhemingly endorsed an extension of the RFA timetabling and provision for greater community participation in the process. The independant audit into the sustainablity of the Wombat Forest resource, supported by Wilson Tuckey of all people, is an example of shift in government approach bought about by detailed analysis and lobbying by the Wombat Forest Society and will be included within the RFA process. And About time!! Even still, the RFA process is still fatally flawed and the Wombat Forestr Society is continually re-evaluating its participation within the process. Unless an adequate extension is provided beyong 31st December, 1999, then we would most likely withdraw from the process. The Wombat Forest Society has been campaigning for too long to be fooled by a convieniently rushed process. Whatever decision make in rgard to the Regional Forest Agreement, will be done on what is best for our local forests, now and into the future, but be assured the Wombat Forest Society is working at many levels for the best possible outcome. The Wombat Forest is everything.

WOMBAT RFA MEETINGS

The Wombat Forest Society held three RFA community information nights over the last three months. The three meetings, attended by 500 people, held in Daylesford, Blackwood and Napoleons, are representative of the Wombat Forest Society's ongoing committment to open and balanced forest debate. All RFA meetings were well atttended and reflective of the local community's increasing concern about the state of our local Wombat Forest. The RFA meetings had forum representation from the Wombat Forest Society, Victorian Association of Forest Industries, Department of Resources and Natural Environment, the Construction, Mining, Forrestry and Energy Union, Victorian Apiarists Association and the Macedon Ranges Conservation Society. The Wombat Forest Society, although conservation based, is committed to real and open dialogue with all stakeholders, including timber interests.

Loris Duclos and Tim Anderson, Wombat Forest Society, expressed strong concerns that the rushed RFA process may inhibit the community's ability to contribute to an agreement process that will adequately protect important environmental considerations, including long-term sustainability and water catchment values. Tim Andersons told the meetings that the current overharvesting of the Wombat Forest will see the timber industry within the Midlands region collapse within fifteen years and that sustaimable yeild outcomes need to be reduced to a more realistic level by any Regional Forest Agreement. Obviously, there is no use governments signing off a 20 year forest agreement if the timber supply cannot be sustained for that period of time. As for vital non-timber values, well who knows.

Tim Anderson added that the Wombat Forest Society's detailed analysis of the DNRE's current and future sustainability modelling shows that local timber interests are already cutting into the next genration of sawlog. Tim Anderson also called for the community to take back the running of the Wombat Forest, given DNRE's incompetence and the unique reltaionship between local comnservationists and the timber industry.

Loris Duclos provided the RFA meetings with a compassionate and impressively detailed synopsis on the ongoing problems for our water catchment and mineral springs due to poor management practises and sustainability issues within the Wombat Forest. She told the meetings that the Wombat Forest contains the headwaters of five major rivers, including the Campapse and Werribee and that any management problems will effect the water supply of over one million people, especiall those in Melbourne's fast growing western corridor.

Most notably, at all the RFA meetings, both the timber industry or DNRE were unable to refute any of the Wombat Forest Society's claims, but instead asked us, the community, to have faith in the process. Sound familiar!!
Well Done Loris and Tim!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
John Drohan, representing the Victorian Association of Forest Industries, told the Daylesford and Blackwood meetings that the timber industry believed that the RFA process would provide both employment and investment certainity for local sawmills due to a more secure resource structure. Reading from prepareed sheets and with a rather banal tone, Mr Drohan was unable to answer about sustainability put forward by community members from the floor. Once again, he put all his faith behind DNRE's ability to sustainably manage the forest. Here we go again! One eye closed, the other greedy one open. Meanwhile our local forests are being trashed.

Michael O'Connor and Jane Calvert, Construction, Mining, Forestry and Energy Union, ran an agressively militant but more honest line. Although expressing strong support for the RFA process to provide job security for local timber workers, they did say that they would reconsider their position if the Wombat Forest was found to be unsustainable. At the Daylesford meeting, the CMFEU member s staged a walkout in protest to certain motions regarding woodchipping, but later expressed thanks to the Wombat Forest Society to actively participate in the local forest debate. Most importantly, the Wombat Forest Society and the CMFEU still continue to have an ongoing relationship with regular dialogue.

Marcus Ward, Macedon Ranges Conservation Society, reinforced the Wombat Forest Society's endorsement that a rushed RFA process would have a negative impact on the community's environmental and recreational rights to the local forests. Marcus believed that the management of the Wombat and Cobaw Forests was being structured to allow for possible privatisation in the future. The Macedon Ranges Conservation Society believe that any particpation in the RFA process is faltered and that the community should reject the process altogether.

At the Napoleons meeting, the Enfield Forest Alliance and Victorian Apairists Association also declared their lack of faith in DNRE and major concerns about the RFA process. Julie Donaghy, Enfield Forest Alliance, spoke of their newly formed local forest group's committment to sustainable and balanced non-timber outcomes within the Enfield Forest especially given its importabnt flora and fauna. John Corrigan, Eureka Timbers, spoke of the timber industry's outlook with a bit more vigor but still little punch. Tim and Loris were fantasic once again.!!!!

Unfortunately, but hardly surprising, the DNRE had only one representative (Ian Miles) at one meeting (Blackwood) and then ask why the community don't have faith in the RFA process.

I believe Mr Jeff Kennett is now aking himself the same Question.

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

november, 1999

REVISED WFS MEETING TIMETABLE

Tuesday 9th Nov 7.30 pm @ Powerhouse, Vincent St, Daylesford
Tuesday 23rd Nov 7.30pm @ Powerhouse, Vincent St, Daylesford
Tuesday 14th Dec 7.30pm @ Powerhouse, Vincent St, Daylesford
Tuesday 21st Dec 7.30pm @ Harvest Cafe, Daylesford
Tuesday 11th Jan 7.30pm @ Powerhouse, Vincent St, Daylesford
Tuesady 25th Jan 7.30pm @ Blackwood Community Hall
Tuesday 8th Feb 7.30pm @ Powerhouse Vincent St, Daylesford
.....please ring before as meeting details change.....

WOMBAT APPROACH GOES FURTHER

Our hardworking and inexhaustable committee member Loris Duclos has shifted with her two boys down to Paynesville and is now applying the Wombat Forest Society approach to the Gippsland forest debate. Loris has quickly set up the Tambo Environment Action Group and is using WFS computer modelling and pro-active dialogue approach has managed to give the Gippsland timber industry and playmates, DNRE, a much needed wake-up call. Amazingly, amongst all this, Loris has still managed to maintain a strong working profile within the Wombat Forest Society, especially with her detailed study of local water catchment values. The woman is an accelerator with no brake and thank goodness she is on our side. Like West Victoria, the Gippsland area is in the midst of a Regional Forest Agreement and surprise, surprise, the sustainability figures look decidely dodgy. Sound familiar!! Anyway, Loris has set about developing open dialogue and relationship opportunity amongst all forest stakeholders, including industry, DNRE, conservation groups, timber unions, apiarists and recreational fisherman. Recent meetings at Bairnsdale and Swifts Creek have shown strong support for both Loris and her approach. Wombat Forest Society committee members, Tim Anderson and Peter O'Mara have involved themselves in the Tambo campaign RFA meetings and the WFS are thrilled to see their unique conservation approach adopted elsewhere. And with much success!!!!!!!

Western Victorian Forest Protection Network

RFA Community Consultation Timetable

Portland
Tuesday 9th November
Supper Room-Civic Hall

2.00-3.00pm South-Western Environmental Action Group
3.30-5.00pm Portland Field Naturalists
Hamilton Field Naturalists

Ballarat
Wednesday 10th November
North Ballarat Sports Club
Wednesday 10th November

12.00-1.00pm Enfield Forest Alliance
Golden Plains Tourism Association
1.15-2.45pm Wombat Forest Society
Daylesford Walking Group
Friends of the Lerdederg
3.00-4.00pm Victorian Apiarists Association
4.15-5.00pm Actively Conserving Trentham

Geelong
Thursday 11th November
Geelong West Town Hall

12.30-1.30pm ANGAIR
1.45-3.15pm Otways Ranges Env. Network
Apollo Bay Landcare
3.30-5.00pm Geelong Community Forum
Geelong Environment Council
Geelong Field Naturalists
Friends of Bannockburn

If undeliverable please return to
Wombat Forest Society
P.O.Box 428
Daylesford, 3460

Social Assessment Report Comphrensive Regional Assessment West Victorian Regional Forest Agreement

Wombat Forest Society Critique

The social assessment component of the West Victorian Regional Forest Agreement has one vital ingredient missing, the community. The Wombat Forest Society are disappointed that the non-timber stakeholders and local communities across the West Victorian region have had no initial or ongoing particpatory role in the scoping or documenting of the this report. The finalised document lacks the collective vision and vibrancy that real community participation can give. The West Victorian Regional Forest Agreement has failed dismally to provide the social analysis to enable balanced, informative that may lead to adequate decision making for all stakeholder and community interests. Low risk. Low outcome.

Limited Flexibilty of Methodology

The variety of data collection methods, although impressively listed in the documented report , lack substainal and strategic assessment of the diversity of the community groupings/stakeholders across this vast region. As the West Victoria region has the largest geographical spread across the state, the survey method applied should have been more adaptable to provide greater analytical scope for local demographics. The West Victorian RFA social assessment strategy would appear to be similiar to both Central Highlands and East Gippsland modelling. Obviously, this is totally inadequate and lacking of representative detail about the diversity of forest users and interest groups that would exist across this much larger geographic area.

Real Participation

The executive summary of the Social Assessment Report clearly states
.....social asseessment is also a mechanism that faciltiates stakeholder and community particpation in a decision making process.....
but the Regional Forest Agreement process in Western Victoria has provided no significant pro-active decision making inputs from non-timber stakeholders and local communities. Instead, the community was constantly sidelined toward a limited and reactive role with the occasional and tokenistic RFA funding. Unbelievably, the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network (23 member groups) were rarely contacted by the Forest Community Co-ordinator or the RFA Steering Committee for any ongoing appraisal or collective intitatives despite a valuable, high profile and sosphicated participation role. The only time that adequate public dialogue opportunity was provided was through our own initiative and facilitation and then

afterward we would have to fight for any feedback. The community consultation process lacked any strategic vision and professionalism. The Social Assessment's claim of stakeholder and community participation in any decision making capacity is an absolute joke.

Scoping

The exclusion of the City of Geelong , the areas largest population base, from the Social Assessment is a major oversight. The community of Geelong is a vital stakeholder within the Western Victoria region, especially given water catchment concerns, yet have no significant profile in the document. Subsequently, the tourism and water catchment links of the region are substainally under-represented. This blunderous, perhaps strategic, exclusion places serious doubts on the balance of the Social Assessment Report, if not the whole RFA process. Although, some minor adjustment has been made to belatedly include Geelong in the public consultation loop, there is no recognition of this community in the Social Assessment Report. Do they not exist? Apparently not.

Surveying Techniques

Mail Surveys

The mail surveys seem to have limited scope and aimed toward business with a timber leaning. As the West Victorian region, especially Midlands and Otways, have such important tourist based industries, a breakdown of the type of businesses surveyed would have been a valuable community indicator The social importance of local forests in regard to the tourism industry seems to be largely unrepresented. The Social and Economic Profile (11.2, CRA Document) appears to be too generalised for such diverse demographic area. Any information is difficult to align to particular areas because of an apparent lack of data breakdown. The employment data provided uses 1996 figures which would appear to be rather outdated and lacking in any whole community analysis. The tourism operators surveyed were only those who had forest user permits which is obviously a very narrow representation.

Telephone Survey

The sample size of the telephone survey and the detailed response provided some valuable information but once again lacked for the want of wider scope. A telephone survey of one of the large regional areas (Geelong or Ballarat) would have been a valuable addition. Strangely, there is no mention of water catchment values within the survey. Is water of such little importance? I think not! I would have liked to have seen a detailing of questions asked in the telephone survey. Any survey can only be adequately analysised when the question information is provided within the assessment report or as additional information. The final part says that 70% of the respondents believe both National Parks and State Parks are important to the local economy of the local area, but obviously the important follow question should have been: Why?? The telephone survey seems to have provided little more than status information and little of detailed issue analysis.

Land Use Decisions

The Social Assessment's "Review of Land Uses" (page16) provides nothing more than a departmental blurb on previous LCC studies without any detailed analysis of the social and economic impact these various recommendations on individual enterprise and local communities. Obviously, there are many impactual considerations on forest land use but the Social Assessment report analysis seems to have only represented an extremely shallow DNRE line. The social impacts of these policies is missing when it would have provided a significant projection of the possible social future implications of land use policy of the West Victorian Regional Forest Agreement. Why has there been any cross analysis of the effects of land use decisions from Regional Forest Agreements that have already been signed?

Selective Forest Industry Analysis

The Forest Industry Activity is well detailed in regard to the Native Timber Processing providing clear employment data but lacking in any analysis of the buoyancy of the local industry. In Daylesford, we have a large sawmill that employs 45 people but yet owes DNRE over $1million in royalities. The sawmill hasn't had a graded sawlog for eight months and remains operational because of government subsidy. As you can see, the social assessment based only on current employment data can be misleading. How can such a business possibly operate for the next twenty years of a forest agreement. This is an extremely important component of the CRA report especially in consideration of compensation packages. Who will receive the compensation payouts? The debt ridden sawmill owner or the timber industry employee? These are major social issues for small townships such as Daylesford. Obviuosly, sawmill operations are struggling under the current value adding climate but we see this nowhere in the social assessment critique. The local native forest timber industry is under pressure to develop alternative, value added markets but are now reliant on woodchip income for cash flow. The word *woodchip* is rarely mentioned yet it is the main economic driver of this industry. The other forest related industries, most notably tourism, would compare favourably in any commercial buoyancy comparision, especially in relation to future economic projection. The real truth is that the native timber industry is struggling and this should be represented in any social assessment, especially one within a RFA projection of twenty years.

Community Case Studies

The Community Case Study undertaken in Daylesford was embrassingly lacking in commuinty participation and strategic outcome. The Social Assessment workshop was attended by just 15 people with five of those from the Wombat Forest Society under various guises. This attendance number would appear to unrepresentative of a town which two months later held a RFA community information night (Wombat Forest Society) attended by 230 people. Obviously, the meeting approach failed to adequately indentify appropriate target groups. The Daylesford/Hepburn Springs area has many diverse forest (and non-forest) interest groups who are extremely passionate and particpatory in local forest issues but were largely unrepresented in the community workshop. Had anybody bothered to consider a different contact approach? Surely, the local council and Wombat Forest Society should have been contacted for community listings rather than just relying on formulised approach. The

workshop, although identifying many of the township's social concerns, failed to adequately explore our social relationship with the forest and many people went away disappointed at the lack of social relationship outcome. The meeting seemed more of a town profile exercise.Once again, the processs failed to provide projection of local forest usage. The meeting structure and approach would appear to have been provided an analysis on tourism rather local forest issues. The Daylesford community annalysis was an interesting status document but with little mention of the forest.

Conclusion

The social assessment of the West Victoria region has failed to provide any instructive social vision but rather regurgitated timber biased ancedotal fact. Given the twenty year length of the agreement, the Wombat Forest Society believe this to be disappointing. Any social assessmnet process could only benefit from greater community input, especially at a group indentificatioin, resource analysis and planning level. The local communities are not just a test sample of forest users but rather thinking, passionate and emotional beings. The CRA assessment report does provide some valuable social information but lacks the balance, vison and decision making ability that greater local community participation would bring.

Written by
Peter O'Mara
Community Liasion Officer
Wombat Forest Society
Western Victorain Forest Protection Network

VICTORIAN FORESTS MEETING

Meeting Date: 4th December, 1999

Venue: Environment Victoria
2nd Floor
19 O'Connell Street
North Melbourne

Meeting began at 10.15am

Apologies...Jill Redwood
Simon Birrell
Kim Devenish
Julie Constable

Attendance...Tristy Fairfield (Friends of the Earth)
Anthony Amis (Friends of the Earth)
Loris Duclos (Tambo Env. Action Group)
Tim Anderson (Wombat Forest Society)
Peter O'Mara (Western Victorian Forest Protection Network)
Gareth Devenish (Goongerah Environment Centre)
Michelle van Gerivink (Goongerah Environment Centre)
Marcus Ward (Wombat/Cobaw Forest Action Group)
Rod Anderson (Environment Victoria)
Gavan MacFadzean (Wilderness Society)

Minutes

1.Welcome/Introduction

Tristy Fairfield (facilitator) set out the meeting structure and protocol

Rod Anderson....general overview and purpose of meeting
...follow up committment made at National Forest Summit
...possibility of collective lobbying approach
Tim Anderson...unsure of collective approach but rather complementary lobbying where possible
Peter O'Mara...welcome the alignment possibilities but didn't want other layer of forest network as happy with current structure of the 20 member group WVFPN working within the West Victorian RFA process
Loris Duclos...believes that we have an important opportunity to consolidate conservation group relationships
Anthony Amis...works with many regional groups throughout Victoria and looking to enhance the growing strength of localised regional campaigns
Gareth Devenish..need for better working relationships for all forest/environmental groups
Michelle van Gervinik...a wonderful political opportunity with cohesive/autonomous approach
Gavan Mac Fadzeen...supports any relationship development between peak/regional groups

2. Relationship between peak & local groups

Open Discussion on positives/negatives

Some Discussion Points
* need to move away from 'blinkered' green campaign
* lack of respect for regional/radical groups from peak groups
* concerns of peak group involvement in local campaigns
* need to recognise broader community/social issues in regard to any conservation issue
* peak groups & regional groups have the right to disagree with each other
* most disputes occur due to a lack of communication between regional & peak groups
* no need of a forest network/alliance but rather a communication interface
* many differences in group attitudes toward forest harvesting, plantations, etc
* relationship between state regional and peak groups seems to be developing
* concerns about certain environmental players trying to dominate and control the forest debate without proper consultation with regional groups and democratic process

3. Network Development

* Communication - committment made by each participant group to develop a shared communication network
    suggestions...e-mail facility
    ...newspaper analysis & collation
    ...tele-conferencing
    ...collective website
    ...extension of current networks
    ...resource sharing/education
    ...forest bulletin

* Joint development of shared forum/workshop
    suggestions...plantations
    ...native forest logging
    ...eco-forestry

4. Shared Principles

a) develop and improve communication flow between regional and peak groups
b) seek shared policy agreement policy where possible
c) attempt to relate to the government with a strategic and unified approach on agreed statewide issues
d) any process should be inclusive and allow for differnce of opinion
e) respect for diversity of opinion and approaches
f) an undertaking to communicate on campaign overlap areas with all groups involved
g) ongoing network maintenance

5. Current Negiotations with Government

All groups discussed current negiotations on all levels of government, most noticalby the new Bracks government. Some positive shifts in approach, however most participant groups still waiting for this to be backed up with committed policy intent. The appointment of Mick Lumb to work through RFA stakeholder concerns was a welcomed initiative but perhaps his brief too narrow. Gavan spoke of TWIS, FOE and EV's appointment of Parliamentary Monitory Officer

6. Other Issues

* Royalties...royalty review started to be completed by March and implemented by July
...union backing review into EGL residual licenses
...individual groups should be pressing for these minimal requirements
-adequate terms of reference
- build in 'water use' payment mechanism into royalties

...Gavan MacFadzeen to draft a collective letter regarding Terms Of Reference/ Dates/ When & How Review

* Code of Forest Practice...Tim Anderson to distribute C.O.F.P. breach kit for group/individuals where to provide legal standing

* Parliamentary Inquiry into Forest Management/DNRE
...each individual to make request to Sherryl Garbutt for immediate committment to a parliamentary inquiry

*EV's 'Celebrities for Forest Projects" as per W.A. style...promote icon areas etc...
...Wendy Radford - project coordinator
... regional groups to contact to promote their local issues

* Plantations Conference - Anthony to begin organising a conference in possible May to try and increase statewide undestanding and possibly common policy

* Eco-Forestry - What is sustainable forestry?
- Restoration Forestry/ Mixed Species/ Agro-Forestry
- Development of web-site information?
- Speaker at Plantations conference

7. Network Maintainence

* establishment of e-mail facility to be done by Michelle..vicforests@wild.net.au
* network provided with access to parliamentary monitoring thru e-mail facility
* Peter to provide minutes to Michelle (e-mail) and Rod (surface mail) to distribute
* next meeting early April

Society believes that this begins with responsible, sustainable and detailed mangement of t

RFA Overview by Steve Watts (Forest Task Force) and
Tim Anderson (Western Victorian Forest Protection Network)

followed by
individual group consultations

now where is it, you ask

Dear

I am writing to provide further detail to our RFA meeting with Federal and State agencies on Saturday, July 10th in Ballarat. The meeting will be held at the BRACE Education & Training Centre commencing at 10am. The day will consist of a general RFA briefing and questions, followed by individual consultations with the appropriate RFA personnel. I will be timetabling all individual groups to ensure that your concerns are given the approproate forum. Obviously, this is a extremely important meeting as the RFA agreement will lock in the management of our forests for the next 20 years. As the Wombat Forest Society has already taken their concerns to Canberra we will involve ourselves on the day in a facilitory capacity. If there is anything we can help with please let us know. The RFA meeting will be funded through RFA participation monies sought by the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network. Each participating group will be provided with a travelling allowance so please keep petrol receipts. Also, a catered lunch will be provided by local caterer, Gary Thomas, with each group given a complimentary meal. Any additional lunches will be a donation of $10 each, however, if any participating member has limited funds then we will provide a meal without cost. It is vital that we all support each other to provide for best possible outcome. We will also provide a common room facility for the light refreshments, including coffee and tea. Early next week, I will contact each group with a more detailed agenda and to find exact out participating numbers. Please call me if you have any concerns or suggestions.

Thank-you

Peter O'Mara
ph 53481154

YOUR SAY
THE AGE NEWSPAPER
fax no:9601 2414

Dear Editor

My diminishing belief in creditable business journalism has taken another, perhaps even fatal, bodyblow. The speculative and totally unbalanced timber industry job loss scenario proported by Philip Hopkins (The Age 31/1) due to the possible Regional Forest Agreement consists of nothing more than bloated industry verbatim. The timber industry propaganda machine has obviously hitched an easy ride on lazy and unqualified journalism. The prediction of 700 job losses is simply exaggarated industry driven hype. The reality is that any forest job cannot be justified above existing forest resource. Sustainability has no compromise postion. Our local forests should never be rationalised upon narrow employmnet data that doesn't provide any balanced consideration of non-timber values. I suggest that Mr Hopkins provides himself a day away from the office, preferably without his computer laptop, and takes a long slow walk into the Wombat Forest. the real loss in any timber industry employment is our our natural environment.

Peter O'Mara
Wombat Forest Society
1 Second Street
Hepburn Springs, 3461
ph 5348-1154

Macedon Ranges Conservation Society

P.O.Box 51, Macedon
Marcus Ward
ph: 5423-5254

RFA CONCERNS

* Loss of community control of the community asset (Forests)

* Inflexibility of RFA has implications for several areas
  1. Inability to adapt to changing status of species

  2. Inability to adapt to changing recreational needs of greater & local community

  3. Inability to adapt to disaster (ie. Bushfire)..this would change all equations with the RFA process

  4. Inability to adjust logging rates should they prove to be too high-which we strongly believe that they are currently-clearly regeneration in the Cobalts for example, is an obvious failure

* Reduced incentive for industry to respond to community concerns

* Reduced incentive for industry to manage their use of the forest sustainably

ATTENTION: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MIDLAND EXPRESS
fax no. 5422-3173

Dear Editor

The sustainability problems of our local forests continues to be a major concern to our local communities. The reality is that our forests are now at the unsustainable whim of industry-based management practices. Current DNRE modelling for the Midland area is basically flawed predicting average sawlog volumes that are totally unrealistic when analysed in relation to the diminished forest resource. Subsequently, the local timber industry is now harvesting the next generation's sawlog. Do they care? Apparently not. Recently, Geoff Proctor, chairman of the Midlands Sawmillers and Logging Syndicate, indicated that local sustainability concerns were unfounded. It would seem easy to believe in DNRE management practices and sawlog projections when you are a main financial beneficary. Greed some might call it. The Wombat Forest and Cobaw Ranges are in real danger of being reduced to timber factories with non-timber values, such as conservation and tourism, lying wasted on the forest floor. Unfortunately, money does grow on trees. Local timber industry needs to consider their role in our forest long term sustainability. And now.

Dear Mr Ronaldson

The Wombat Forest Society would like to formally request a meeting with Mr Wilson Tuckey (Minister of Forestry & Conservation) when he is next visiting Melbourne or better still, Ballarat. We believe given our unique shared approach with the timber industry that we provide valuable and worthwhile input to the forest debate, especially the current RFA process. Our ongoing and detailed analysis of sustainability outcomes for the Wombat Forest only add to our valuable contribution. The Wombat Forest Society believe that Mr Tuckey could benefit from meeting with the Wombat Forest Society and listen to our approach.

We look forward to a positive reply to this request.

Peter O’Mara
(Committee Member)
Wombat Forest Society
ph: (03) 5348-1154

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY

P.O.Box
428
Daylesford,
3461
ph/fax
5348.1748

Dear Going Solar,

We are writing to register our disgust and obvious disappointment at your last-minute exclusion of the Wombat Forest Society from the Renewable Energy & Sustainable Living Fair. As we understand, our position within the Fair has been unfairly dismissed due to lobbying by our ex-President, Mr Alan Gray, who obviously has an 'axe to grind' about previous misgivings and his ultimate explusion from our group. It is almost unbelievable that the most prominent and active enviromental group in the local area can be made scapegoats of one man's inability to accept his own fallings. We hope that Going Solar fully consider the implications of their actions. The Wombat Forest Society feel that this censorship is of such magnitude that we would be forced to run some follow-up media to clarify the reasons for our absence at the Fair. We would expect also that Going Solar demonstrate the appropriate reasoning for our dismissal. The Wombat Forest Society had looked with great anticipation to this coming weekend, only to find out once again, that ego has been given precedent over enviromental values. We can only hope that you reconsider your position. The Wombat Forest deserves better.

WESTERN VICTORIAN FOREST PROTECTION NETWORK

The Western Victorian Forest Protection Network has now grown to twenty-three regional groups and has become a strong lobbying mechanism for the diverse rande of non-timber stakeholders across the large geographical spread of the West Victorian RFA. Most recently, we have met with the Conservation Minister, Sherryl Garbutt, to voice our collective concerns about the flawed RFA procsss and ongoing forest management issues. Although, the minister's response to some of our concerns held the usual puppetted governmnet line, we did mange to deal with some of our local campaign issues including more open access to DNRE information, release of important documents and interim protection of logging coupes in the Coobobonee State Forest.Unfortunately, the National Estate listing as an important mineral springs recharege are continues to be given minimal consideration by DNRE despite our sustained campaign. The handling of the National Estate issue within the West Victorian RFA was nothing more than a tokenistic community exercise. An absolute joke. The Western Victorian Forest Protection Network has set up an e-mail facility (thank-you, Geelong Community Forum) for all non-timber stakeholder groups, or individuals, within the Western region. This e-mail facility has proved itself to be an invaluable campaign tool. If anyone would like to go onto the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network e-mail list, you could contact Peter O'Mara (petero@telstraeasymail.com.au) and he could recommend your inclusion. All e-mail inclusion have to be ratified by member groups. The ongoing role of the WVFPN, post RFA, is still undecided but most groups have indicated that the network be maintained. The WVFPN will be meeting in Camperdown in June to discuss future direction and possible strategy. If any Wombat Forest Society would like to attend you are welcome. Contact us for more information. Recently, the WVFPN have successfully lobbied on behalf of the Portland Field Naturalist in having the moratorium on ring culling reinstated in the Cobbobonee Forest.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Wombat Forest Society needs to look to the future. Our West Victorian RFA campaigning has required a huge time requirement and many of our more localised activities have suffered. In response to this, the Wombat Forest Society committee has made a year 2000 comittment to the local machinations of our campaign. Hopefully, through our Powerhouse office space, ongoing local forest tours, e-mail network, market stalls and community fundraisers, the WFS acn facilitate a growing awareness (& participation) in local forest issues. Wombat Forest Society members, Peter O'Mara & Hugh Burnham, have set about developing a Wombat Forest Field Guide to increase the local knowledge base.
Got any other ideas? Be Involved?

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY & THE MEDIA

The last twelve months has shown an unprecedented coverage of Wombat Forest issues in the Melbourne press. A strong relationship has developed between The Age environmental jornalist, Claire Miller, and the Wombat Forest Society. The Wombat Forest Society has been encouraged by the willingness of The Age to focus on the local forest campaigns as an important environmental issue instead of just relying on the peak environment groups. The increasing profile of local environment campagins, such as the Wombat Forest Society, OREN, Tambo Environmental Awareneess Group, Portland Field Naturalsits, has provided for a more substainal regional input into the investigative and informative work of our print media. The Wombat Forest Society has featured in six Age articles this year alone, including the Age Feature, “A Lot Of Explaining To Do“ on March... Unfortunately, the mainstream television and radio broadcasters continue to overlook the regional issues unless they have some arrest footage or cute koalas although our local WIN telvision station has shown itself to be an exception. In fact, Time Anderson (WFS Prsident) was seen himself holding a young baby in a recent television interview. Nice touch Tim!!!!

TELL ME THAT IT ISN”T TRUE?

The logging industry have been consistently telling local communities throughout the West Victorian RFA process that they look after our local forests and its many biodiversity considerations. Yeah Right!!! A recent meeting of about 40 sawmill owners and logging contractors in Ballarat with Federal Forestry Minister, Wilson Tuckey, exposed the real truth.....SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT & BIODIVERSITY OUTCOMES are not on their agenda. In short, it is just business as usual. Greed. Greed. More Greed. Amongst the suggested options to increase the logging industry diminishing resource base are these unbelievable suggestions.

1. Decrease in existing Reserves & the right to log some before they are set as reserves.
2. No 10% contingency buffer in sustainable yeild calculations.
3. Harvest all low production forests.
4. Delay in implementing 10 ha and less logging ares.
5. Lessening of Code Of Forest Practise for the Midlands Forest Management Area
6. The use of fertilisers and intensive thinning to accelerte growth rates.
7. Massive increase in pulp production (ie. Woodchips).
8. Relaxation of Code Of Forest Practises to enable logging of stream side buffers zones and other protected areas.
9. Aggregate the protection Environmental Vegitation Classes to increase areas available for logging.
10. Two year deferral of conservation and habitat reserves so that some cam be logged.

The attitude of this meeting displays utter contempt for our local communities expectation of a responsible logging industry and sound government management of our forest resource. As well as a total lack of interest in the retention of forest biodiversity values. It should be noted that the proposed conservation reserve system within the West Victorian RFA, inadequate as it is, indicates that the DNRE has drastically overestimated the sustainable yeild figures of the Wombat Forest. Instead of taking a responsible environmental line, the logging industry plead ignorance and blame the department. Absolutely ludicrous!!! The Wombat Forest Society are extremely disappointed in our local logging industry involvement in these discussions espescially given their continual public support of adequate environmental considerations within the Wombat Forest. Total Bullshit!!!!!!!!!!!!

EDITORIAL

Welcome to our latest newsletter! In this newsletter we will attempt to provide some of our Regional Forest Agreement campaign to our members via part of our written submission to the RFA Independant Panel, local meeting information, campaign updates, newspaper articles and our ongoing participation in the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network. Also, we will be looking at the future directions of the Wombat Forest Society and the greater involvement of our core membership. The last two years has seen our campaign concentrate on the West Victorian Regional Forest Agreement with strong emphasis on sustainable yield and water values while maintaining our wholistic environmental approach. Our leadership role within the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network has been another significant, and somewhat time consuming, contribution to this campaign approach. The Wombat Forest is both everything and part of everything else. The challenge of the Wombat Forest Society is to find a balance of all of these considerations. A recent talk by local environmentalist, Barry Golding, (DNRE Forest Forum - Ballarat), highlighted the need for humankind to be considered, and consider ourselves, as an important component of the biodiversity equation. In other words, we are as much a living organism of the forest culture as the Powerful Owl or the rare Grevillea , not some inorganic sub-species. I had once written, that *the sum of all trees equalled God*, but obviously there is more than this although I still argue that it isn't a bad place to begin. So what does this all mean to our local Wombat Forest campaign?. My belief is that the Wombat Forest Society needs to challenge it's own methodology and reinvigorate it's local campaign with more forward thinking, pro-active community inclusive projects. Our last two years of campaigning has further established the integrity of the Wombat Forest Society but neglected stronger relationship with our membership base. We need to make adjustments. We must continue our own evolution. Finally, I would like to thank all those members who contributed to the West Victorian Regional Forest Agreement campaign, especially those who made submissions. A special mention also to our committee member families who have sacrificed much, personally & financially, to allow us all to traverse the countryside fighting for our local Wombat Forest & beyond. Well Done Everyone...

WOMBAT FOREST FIELD GUIDE

The Wombat Forest Society is calling for interested community members (and groups) to develop a comphrensive Field Guide for the local Wombat Forest. The Field Guide might include flora/fauna information, walking trials, aboriginal heritage, photographs, illustrations, conservation history, tree identification, etc.... Already, several people have indicated their interest in the the field guide and WFS committee members, Peter O'Mara and Hugh Burnham, have nominated as project managers. The Wombat Forest Society. Field Guide would provide a wonderful forest resource for both our local community and visitors to the Wombat Forest. A Field Guide meeting will be held on Wednesday 14th June at 7.30pm (Powerhouse). BYO Creative Spirit & Enthusiasm. Alcohol optional.
Any questions, ring Peter O'Mara...5348-1154

Find below an extract from a speech given by Cecilia Rodriguez of the Ejercito Zapatista de Libercion Nacional, an indigenous army based in the mountains of southeatern Chiapas, Mexico. The speech was delivered to the Native Forest Network Conference in Missoula, Montana on November 11, 1994. From 1981 to 1989, 2,444,700 cubic metres of precious woods, conifers and tropical trees were taken from the state of Chiapas, and that in 1988, the explotation of these trees produced $8 million in profit, six thousand percent more than 1980. The Zapatistas have declared war on the Mexican Government in order to save the rainforests (& other environmental resources) of Chiapas from the destructive claws of US Multinationals.

....."We have heard the doublespeak of the powerful: where he says peace, he makes war. Where he says life, he gives death. Where he says respect, he decrees degradation. Where he says truth only lies walk. Today, our sorrow turns to seek a place in your hearts. Our thoughts ask little, only that you no longer hold back your desire to find that lost dignity. We only ask that a small piece of your heart be Zapatista. That it will never sell out. That it never surrender. That it resist. That you continue in your places and with your means to struggle forever so that dignity and not poverty be the harvest in all corners of our nation. Good people of the Native Forest Network, I ask that your heart be Zapatista, so that human dignity is the harvest in all corners of the globe. Thank you very much for your attention.

Cecilia Rodreguiz

POST RFA ACTION

Following further investigation, the Wombat Forest Society has identified several other logging coupes, like those above Wombat Reservoir, Daylesford, that clearly contravene the recently signed Regional Forest Agreement logging perscriptions in the Midlands Forest Management Area. These coupe size anomolies found in the Colbrook (Werribee River) and Kouweingburra (Moorabool River) water supply catchments have wide ranging implications to the water supply of both Ballan and Geelong.

"This year, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment plan to log several large Shelterwood 2 coupes in designated water supply catchmements, arguing that coupe size limitations do not apply to these silviculture areas," says Peter O'Mara, Wombat Forest Society spokesperson. "The Wombat Forest Society believe that this proposed logging highly questionable, perhaps illegal, especially in designated catchments that have previously been subjected to Land Use Determinations that limit the size of coupes and other activities to protect recognised water values. The West Victorian RFA clearly ratifies the restrictions on coupe size, yet DNRE have scheduled several Shelterwood 2 coupes many times larger than the stated maximum coupe size. Regional forest planning rely on these forest management plans for fundamental protection of environmental, cultural and resource values within our local forests but seem to be totally compromised when conflicting with logging interests. Corporate greed has been given precedent over community need."

Athough the Colbrook water supply catchment has a coupe size limitation of 5ha, one of the proposed coupe is 82ha. DNRE propose to log 184ha in one year.

"The Midlands Forest Management Plan in Designated water supply areas limits the proportion of regrowth up to 20 years old to a maximum of 20%, yet the three Colbrook coupes, Gentle Annie Track, Big Tree and Paradise Road amount to 14.5% of the designated State Forest water supply catchmement area being logged in one year. The names of these coupes would now appear to be a cruel and twisted joke."

Furthermore, the proposed logging coupes in the designated Kouweingburra water supply catchment contravene DNRE perscriptions of a maximum coupe size for this area of 15ha.

"Once again, these coupe sizes contravene the DNRE perscriptions and make a mockery of the protection of water supply catchments. If these two coupes, Squires Track and Broken Track, total size 86ha, are added to next years proposed logging schedule of 100ha, then 15.7% of the designated water catchment area will be logged in three years. These figures are totally unacceptable to the local community expectation of responsible and sustainable forest management. Water production and quality considerations must be given priority especially in catchments of limited streamflow that sevice regions with high current or potential deamand. The water issue is the big challenge of future forest management practices and ongoing consultation should be undertaken between DNRE, water supply authorities and the local community."

The Wombat Forest Society has notified both Central Highlands Water and Barwon Water of the coupe size problems in designated water catchments and have asked for these authorities to adopt a more pro-active approach to forest management issues.

"Our local water authorities, such as Central Highlands Water, need also to take a more responsible and qualified approach to these matters. The relationship between logging and water supply and quality can no longer be ignored and must firstly be addressed at a coupe level. The chlorination of the Daylesford water supply by Central Highlands Water is the end result of a very sick system. Our new tourism logo could be ..Come to Daylesford...Take the Waters.. And taste Chlorine. Totally absurd."

Peter O'Mara

WESTERN VICTORIAN FOREST PROTECTION NETWORK

p.o.box 428, daylesford, 3460

To: Sherryl Garbutt
Minister for Environment & Conservation
8 Nicholson Street
East Melbourne, 3002

5th April, 2000

Dear Ms Garbutt

I am writing regarding our ongoing participation in the West Victorian Regional Forest Agreement. Our twenty-three member groups have all indicated extending the network operation and are requesting an immediate meeting to discuss the West Victorian RFA blueprint and proposed forest strategies. The Western Victorian Forest Protection Network has proven to an extremely successful lobbying mechanism between regional conservation groups and the State Government and would be expecting a substainal post-RFA breifing. An immediate concern expressed by many member groups is the non-continuance of the monatorium on cull ringing of hollow bearing trees in the Portland Forest Management Area. The Western Victorian Forest Protection Network are asking that the moratorium remain until the completion of the Portland Forest Management Plan. The destruction of these hollow bearing trees has been excessive in the past and any further elimination would have critical consequence for a number of fauna species. The original 12 month moratorium was implemented in reaction to such concerns to which RFA process has been unable to adequately counter, so it would be logical to maintain. Also, the WVFPN believe that it would be a tremendous show of *good will* to the local Portland community and provide a postitive platform for the upcoming forest management plan participation. Obviously, all Western Victorian Forest Protection Network member groups will have RFA issues, both positive and negative, and an immediate meeting would also signal the State Government's intent to maintain open and transparent dialogue with all forest stakeholders. The WVFPN are holding a post-RFA meeting with all member groups in Camperdown on Sunday, 30th April and would appreciate a scheduled meeting with the minister shortly thereafter.
Looking forward to your positive reply.

Peter O'Mara
Community Liason Officer
West Victorian Forest Protection Network
Wombat Forest Society

Wild & Wonderful Wood & Water Work & Wildlife
ASN: A0029445N
PO Box 428, Daylesford. 3460.
Ph/Fax: 0353 481748.
To: Peter Keppels
Commercial Forest Manager
NRE West Victoria.

From: Tim Anderson
Wombat Forest Society

Dear Peter,

This is a letter stating the intention of the Wombat Forest Society to take NRE to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal over the 'Proposed Wood Utilisation Plans' for the Midlands FMA for the 2001-2004 period.

It is the WFS's belief that the intensity of coupes in the Wombat Forest is extreme. The WFS further believes that NRE's interpretation of the Code of Forest Practice in relation to adjacency criteria and SW2 cuts is wrong. The evidence is that SW2 cuts leave a coupe in essentially and structurally the same as an equivalent age clearfall coupe. Your intensity of harvesting will impact in a way that more than acceptable from a catchment perspective.

The proposed WUPs have many coupes abutting each other that contravene the adjacency criterion.

It is clear that NRE have failed to manage the Midlands sustainably. The WUPs may reflect the area needed by NRE to supply timber volumes, but to need to cut around 13% of an area in 3years will compromise other values that NRE is obliged to look after.

The WFS has attempted to get NRE to face reality and reduce logging to a sustainable level. Regretfully NRE appears unwilling or unable to achieve this. The WFS is therefore forced to the position of using other State Authorities to intercede.

The WFS will also be appealing against Midway's assumed CSR License, that has some how grown to 80 000 tons. We believe that given the reductions in the announced Consultative Paper's, and further WFS analysis, that there are no grounds for the granting of this license. The WFS believes that the sustainable yield for the Midlands should be around 25 000m3/p.a.

For NRE to have targeted such an intensity of harvesting between Daylesford and Blackwood, straight after the RFAs, appears to be an act of arrogance. The WFS believes that this intensity of operations in this area will push the broader community into totally rejecting timber harvesting in the region and will herald the start of 'forest protests' in the Wombat. Enough is enough. The community has been tolerant until now, what is proposed will be the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back.

The Wombat Forest Society has not done a formal response to the WUPs as the RFAs have taken our time. This does not mean that we will be silent on what you propose.

Yours truly,
Tim Anderson
Tim Anderson
Cc: Minster Garbutt
Geoff Scales

E-MAIL NETWORK

The Wombat Forest Society now has an e-mail network. Thanks to a bit of pushing from our hardworking member, Suresh Pathy, the Wombat Forest Society has moved into the new technological age. The e-mail/internet thing is a fantastic campaign tool and hopefully will enable the Wombat Forest Society committee to develop a more efficient communication link with our members. The e-mail network can be accessed by sending to **wombatwfs@telstra.com** to register your address. Alternatively, members can provide their e-mail address via their membership renewal. If you have already supplied your e-mail address please do so again as we have had some difficulty with several of our members addresses. Anyway, welcome to the New Age..

WOMBAT FOREST BUS TOURS

Yes, they're back!!!!! The Wombat Forest Society will be running bi-monthly bus tours into the Wombat Forest beginning Sunday, 25th June, 2000. The bus tours will leave from the Powerhouse (9 Vincent Street, Daylesford) at 10pm. The forest tours will last for approximately 2 hours and cost $5-$10 depending on numbers. The Wombat Forest tours are an ideal way to familarise yourself with local forest issues and find out more about our ongoing campaign and future directions.

To make a booking, please ring Hugh Burnham on 5348-3617
or the Wombat Forest Society on 5348-1748

Western Victorian Forest Protection Network

A0037400L
p.o.box 428, daylesford, 3460

Nomination Form

For: President
Secretary
Treasurer
2 Ordinary Members Of The Committee

I (Full Name), hereby nominate (Full Name) for the position of of the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network Inc.

.....(Signature)
.....(Date)

I (Full Name), hereby second the nomination of (Full Name) for the position of of the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network Inc.

.....(Signature)
.....(Date)

I (Full Name), hereby consent to my nomination for the position of of the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network Inc.

.....(Signature)
.....(Date)

NOTE All persons nominating, seconding or being nominated on this form must be current members of the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network Inc.

Western Victorian Forest Protection Network
A0037400L
p.o.box 428, daylesford, 3460

Membership Form

(Membership $2.00)

Applicants Name.....Title.....
Representing the following organization (if applicable).....
.....
Contact Phones:.....(BH).....(AH)
Contact E-Mail:.....
Contact Address.....

Signed.....
Date.....

Payment Enclosed
Membership $
Donation $
Total Payment $

Dear Member Group,
The Annual General Meeting of the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network Inc.(A0037400L) will be held at the Killara Centre, 214 Manifold Street, Camperdown on Sunday June 4th, beginning at 10.30am. I have included a draft agenda and also nomination forms for the Election Of Office Bearers. If you wish to make an adjustment/addition to the proposed draft, then could you please notify me as soon as possible. Could member groups please bring a donation/contribution toward the venue hire.

DRAFT AGENDA
1.ATTENDANCE
2. APOLOGIES
3. RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS ON TRANSACTIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION DURING THE LAST PRECEDING FINANCIAL YEAR
4. HOUSEKEEPING
*Election Of Office Bearers
President
Secretary
Treasurer
2 ordinary committee members
Association is also required to elect a Public Officer.
The Public Officer need not be a member of the Association.
A complete nomination form (blanks attached) must be recieved by the Secretary, Peter O'Mara, P.O. Box 38 Hepburn Springs, 3461, not later than 5.00pm on Wednesday 31st May, 2000.
5. RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE STATEMENT TO BE SUBMITTED BY THE ASSOCIATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 30 (3) OF THE ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATIONS ACT 1981 - FINANCIAL STATEMENT
6. NETWORK MAINTENANCE
(15 minutes)
7. RFA OUTCOMES
*Member views on outcomes of the RFA
(5 minutes per report)
LUNCH
8. GOVERNMENT LOBBYING
*ALP Reviews/State Budget
*OREN Update
*Violence In The Forests
*Portland Field Naturalists Update
(1 Hour)
9. CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES
*National Forest Summit
*Woodchip Rally
*Future Directions
10. INTERGROUP RELATIONS
*Campaign Protocols
*Earthworker
*Media/Letter Writing Protocol for WVFPN
(20 Minutes)

Look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Regards,

Peter O'Mara
Secretary
ph: 5348-1154

To: Ms Sherryl Garbutt
Level 17
8 Nicholson Street
East Melbourne, 3002

27th April, 2000

Dear Ms Garbutt

I am writing regarding my recent request for a meeting with you and member groups of the Western Victorian Forest Protection Network.

The WVFPN have been encouraged by the recent facilitated discussions in the Otways region and the immediate reinstatement of the ring-culling moratorium on the Portland FMA. In view of past experiences with DNRE operations in the Portland FMA, our 23 member group network are asking for a clearer definition of a hollow-bearing tree within the Portland FMA and exactly how the ring-culling moratorium will be monitored. We would also like to be assured that the Portland FMA will not be allowed, by default in the wording of any restriction, to simply substitute some other tactic (such as 'selective felling' or 'hazard removal') to remove trees that would have otherwise have been ring-culled.

The ongoing monitoring of the Reserve System blueprinted in the West Victorain RFA is also a major concern. Already, the Wombat Forest Society have shown anomalies in the logging prescriptions for water catchment areas which need to be clarified. Also, the structure and non-government input into the follow-up reviews, such as the Otways hydrology research and how responsive the West Victorian RFA will be to such reviews is a significant matter of importance to our network Obviously, all stakeholders need to begin working together to achieve inclusive, responsible and sustainable management of our local forests.

Hopefully, these concerns can be worked through in our meeting

We look forward to a quick reply

Peter O'Mara
Community Liason Officer
Western Victorian Forest Protection Network`

TIMBER CERTIFICATION???

The Wombat Forest Society will be represented at the National Forest Summit in Mourya, N.S.W. on May 5-7th. The National Forest Summit will be focusing on, amongst other things, the Australian Forest Standard being pushing forward by Wilson Tuckey and his Australian Federal Government cohorts to derail the market dominance of the Forest Stewardship Council. The development of the proposed Australian Forest Standard is part of an international campaign by governments and industry to swamp "ethical markets" with a number of competing schemes. In an attempt to create a show of government/industry independence, these schemes are accredited under the ISO 14000 "environmental management system". However, this system does not examine the sustainability of a company's performance on the forest management unit level, and does not "certify" logging standards. In 1999, the Federal Minister for Forestry in Australia, Wilson Tuckey travelled to Europe and the United States to promote a new forest certification program which would operate without any non-government organisation (NGO) input. It is a concerted attempt to undermine non-government schemes, in particular the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which is currently the world's most universally recognised independent certification scheme. The FSC was founded in Toronto, Canada, in 1993. Its objective is to promote the environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of forests worldwide. The FSC established an independent label based on ten internationally binding principles and criteria's. Interestingly, the World Wildlife Fund for Nature, one of the FSC supporters, have held preliminary meetings with the Wombat Forest Society and local logging interests regarding a possible FSC certification for the Wombat Forest due to our unique campaign approach. While the FSC is not without its fallings in some areas, it is nevertheless the most significant independent certification scheme in the world. The FSC principles demand that all stakeholders, including conservation NGO's and aboriginal people determine what forests should be protected and not compromised, and how forests should be managed. A growing number of consumers of timber are changing their buying habits and have switched to FSC certified timber. Amongst others, British Rail track has decided to cancel a 100 year contract (worth over $4 million a year) and agreed not to buy any West Australian timber because it doesn't carry a FSC label. Globally, the logging industry is greatly concerned at the environmental gains that have been achieved as a result of the FSC's entrance into the international market. The Australian Government is playing a key role in trying to convince other countries that governments know best and the view of other stakeholders don't count. Obviously, the National Forest Summit focus on Timber Certification is vital in developing a common ground regarding independent certification, and to develop a nationally consistent set of management principles. The Wombat Forest Society have a strong commitment to the timber certification issue and welcome any member to involve themselves in this important issue. Call Peter O'Mara on 5348-1154.

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY

RFA PRESS RELEASE

The Wombat Forest Society believe that the West Victorian Regional Forest Agreement has delivered both positive and negative outcomes for the Wombat Forest. The additional strategies complementary to the agreement are a definite bonus and vindication of the Wombat Forest Society's position of staying in the RFAs and using them as a means of exposing the disgraceful condition of the forests in the Midlands Forest Management Area. The WFS see the RFAs and the Brack's Government's announcement's of a number of studies and audit's into NRE as one of the most significant steps forward for our forests for over a decade. The WFS also have a number of concerns with regards to short-term timber volumes and woodchipping.

"The studies announced by the State Government over the next 12 to 36 months has the potential to see huge changes to the timber industry across the State. It is about time that a number of issues that have been 'festering' for years are faced up to." Said Wombat Forest Society spokesperson Tim Anderson. "These studies will include a review into clearfelling practices and woodchipping from our forests. As most people know, it is hard to see how non-timber values are preserved in a clearfell coupe."

Further studies will contain an independent review into the 'setting of sustainable yields and sawlog supplies.' The WFS believes that the announced reduction in the sustainable yield for the Midland's from the current 58 000 cubic meters of sawlog a year down to 40 000 m3 is only an interim step. WFS analysis on the recently announced NRE reworking of data, shows that the reduction has not factored in the over-harvesting of the Wombat. WFS modelling predicts that the sustainable yield for the Midlands should in fact be 25 000m3 p.a.

"The WFS believes that when the sustainable yield rate is properly assessed and set by the independent consultants in 2 years time, probably down to 25 000m3, that the local timber industry will be forced to question its own viability." Said Mr. Anderson " At the very least I believe that in around ten years time the industry will find its self in a position where the obvious lack of resource in the area will make it hard for contractors and sawmillers to justify updating their plant and machinery. The trees will not be there to give the returns to even pay off the new equipment."

"We welcome the initiatives to examine royalties and charges, log grading, the recovery of sawlogs from harvesting, harvesting arrangements and log allocation and the independent sustainability consultants. The WFS has long argued for many of these inquiries and believe that they will contribute towards securing a truly sustainable forest management system."

The WFS believes that the announced package should have contained a similar hydrological study for the Wombat to the one announced for the Otways. The Wombat supplies water to over one million Victorians and vital water to irrigators and other industries. The WFS will be lobbying for this much called for and absolutely vital study.

The contentious issue of woodchipping is still a concern. The announced reductions in sustainable yield and the growing recognition that this reduction is not enough, means that woodchipping levels will also need to be reduced. The WFS are concerned that the three years it will take for the sustainability review will give Midways the chance to further decimate and compromise the Midland's forests. The WFS is calling on an immediate reduction in woodchipping levels.

'The WFS is also questioning whether the delayed implementation of the sawlog reduction for at least two years is in the best interests of the forests, the community and the timber industry. If we even take 40 000m3 as what the figure should be, then to allow harvesting at 58 000 for two years will allow an extra 36 000 m3 of sawlogs to be cut. This is almost the equivalent of a full year's quota. In an area that is clearly in crisis, this extra over harvesting will only speed up the end of the resource and the timber industry."

Mr Anderson went on to say that "The Wombat Forest Society is sending a clear warning to the members of the timber industry that drive timber production. The general community in the area is not anti-logging, but it is highly critical of the disgracefully over-cut forests. If Midways or Black Forest Sawmill or others think that they can use this next 3 year period to rip out as much timber and woodchips as it can, or target the very best bits of bush left, then you risk having the community turn entirely against you."
The Reserve design for the Wombat is still not adequate, with Blackwood and the Lerderderg River getting too little and some forest types needing greater protection. The WFS applauds the efforts of the 'Actively Conserving Trentham' for its campaign and win for the areas abutting the town. Also the Bullengarook Landcare for the Pyrete Ranges. The RFA also has the Cobaws unavailable for logging.

Communities all around this region should be grateful to the dozens of people who participated and fought for our forests in the RFA. The submissions that where produced where of a very high quality and did make a difference. It is time that our communities re-unite and work for the future of our forests. The WFS will now be lobbying for the Wombat/Midlands to be used as a pilot for a 'Community Forest Management System.'
"There have been a lot of criticisms of the new State Member for Gisborne, Hon. Joanne Duncan, during the RFA process. The WFS is aware of huge 'behind the scenes' tenacity and time that the Member put in for the forests and the community. The WFS would like to thank Joanne for her dedication." Concluded Mr. Anderson.

WOMBAT FOREST BUS TOURS

Yes, they're back!!!!! The Wombat Forest Society will be running bi-monthly bus tours into the Wombat Forest beginning Sunday, 25th June, 2000. The bus tours will leave from the Powerhouse (9 Vincent Street, Daylesford) at 10pm. The forest tours will last for approximately 2 hours and cost $5-$10 depending on numbers. The Wombat Forest tours are an ideal way to familarise yourself with local forest issues and find out more about our ongoing campaign and future directions.

To make a booking, please ring Hugh Burnham on 5348-3617
or the Wombat Forest Society on 5348-1748

TREES OF THE WOMBAT FOREST

Copyright: Trees Of Victoria....L.F.Costermans

Manna Gum (Ribbony Gum)

JOHN'S WORLD

Wombat Forest Society committee member John Endacott sent a submission to the West Victorian RFA Independent Panel. This submission (8 pages) was supported by two appendices.....

A. Revision of Flora & Fauna Chapter of Wombat Forest Society 1996 Submission to DNRE regarding the proposed Midlands FMA Management Plan (20 pages)

B. Revision of Regeneration presentation for the Forest Field Day at Bullarto, May 1999.

John's RFA submission, although covering many aspects of forest management, concentrates on Flora & Fauna aspects of management of the Wombat Forest.

Rather than waste paper (and trees) here and now, if any member would like to read a copy of this submission, you have three choices

1. Obtain a copy on 3 1/2" floppy disk ($1)
2. Obtain a hard copy (printed)..cost $6
3. Receive the submission via e-mail (free)

Whatever your choice, please contact Wombat Forest Society for your order.

Looking Ahead

Now that the Regional Forest Agreement has been signed, we have a bit of breathing space, but there will still be a huge amount of work to do-hopefully under less pressure.

We will need to remain active to keep a watchful and critical eye on the various studies and investigations which are required as conditions of signing of the RFA (Attachments #1-11 West Victorian RFA)

Also we will be keenly looking forward to the scheduled review of the Midlands FMA Management Plan, and believe that from the start it is a very defective document, but at least there will be a chance to have it improved by the process of review.

John Endacott

THANK YOU!!!!!

The Wombat Forest Society would like to thank Dynamo House Pty Ltd for their generous donation of 2000 'Save The Wombat Forest' stickers to help our campaign. Dynamo House design and manufacture Gifts, Products & Publications. All items are Australian Made. Dynamo House can be contacted on 9427-0955.(phone) and 9429-8036 (fax)...4-10 Yorkshire St, Richmond, 3121.....

RFA OUTCOMES

* Addition of 5600ha Pyrete Range to the Lederderg State Park

* Additional funding for plantation development & initiatives to encourage private forestry in the Wombat State Forest

* extra 194 00 ha of Forest Reserve in West Victorian region

* reduction of sawlog yeild from 56000m2 to 40000m2 & subsequent reduction in the amount of woodchip to be removed from the Wombat State Forest

*in the next twelve months
-review royalties, charges & grading and recovery of sawlogs from the State Forests
- conduct independant study into the process of setting sustainable yields & supplying sawlogs
- review harvesting arrangements
- hydrology research committments in the Otways
- an independant study into the economic potential of tourism on the Otways, daylesford and
East Gippsland
- establish a Forest Industry Council as the principle body responsible for advising on the
development of the Forest and Forest Industry Plan

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor
The narrowly myopic and plainly false accussation by Mr N.F.Trealor and Dr Kim Stock regarding the Portland Field Naturalists Club's lack of participation in the RFA process smells badly like another DNRE bluff job. Outside their extensive local participatory campaign, the Portland Field Naturalists were are a key player in the 23 member group Western Victorian Forest Protection Network, and believe me, participated fully in the Western Victorian RFA process. The obvious point that Mr Trealor and Dr Stock have overlooked is that participation does not mean silence to outcome. The Western Victorian RFA was an extremely flawed process. The failure of the process to provide the National Estate Indentification and Assessment Report and the Biodiversity Assessment Report before the document was signed are two unforgiveable examples. The recent reinstatement of the ring-culling moratorium was due to the Portland Field Naturalist post RFA lobbying, or not accepting the umpires decision, as you say. Well, I say, thank God. The real story is that the Cobboboonee State Forest, like many others, is being logged unsustainably under the DNRE tree factory regime. Just who then will keep them accountable?
Peter O'Mara
Wombat Forest Society
1 Second Street
Hepburn Springs, 3461
ph:5348-1154

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The Hepburn Football/Netball Club is everything to the young children of our local community. I have now been a resident of Hepburn Springs for the last ten years and also a local Primary School teacher, including both ongoing casual and permanent teaching stints at the Hepburn Primary School. During this time, I have personally witnessed the integral link between our local Football/Netball Club and the educational and personal growth of our young children. In recognition of this important link, I have also availed myself to umpire several Under 14 games during each of the last two seasons and have found the Hepburn Football/Netball Club's passionate and professional commitment to their junior programs to be of the highest standard. I can now understand why many of the young students attending Hepburn Primary School can hardly wait long enough to pull on the red/blue colours of the Hepburn Kookaburras. The joyous recounts of the weekend games during Monday's morning talk are a highlight of my working day. Furthermore, the Hepburn Football/Netball Club have played a significant role to our local school football program over a number of years, providing expertise coaching and club uniforms for both the school football and netball teams. Four years back, when our school was undergoing internal difficulties, the Hepburn Football/Netball Club were the first upon our classroom door to offer help and we collectively arranged a sports day against a neighbouring school, which not only lifted our flagging school spirit, but also provided the teaching staff with a much needed boost. Obviously, our school community and local football/netball club have long standing and interwoven links. Any imposed ban will effect us all. My real concern is that we are replacing a negative incident with a negative outcome (ie. three year ban). This action will teach our young children nothing of pro-active and inclusive conflict resolution. The possible introduction of a league based *Player Code of Conduct*, juniors included, would provide a more positive example to our young children. Our local community cannot afford for our football/netball club to fold. I am offering my umpiring skills to the Under 14's home games for the remainder of this season in recognition of the Hepburn Football/Netball Club's important community role. I can only hope that the tribunal also take positive action to provide ongoing participation for our junior teams. Our young children grow up too quickly enough.

Peter O'Mara
Primary School Teacher
1 Second Street
Hepburn Springs, 3461 ph: 5348-1154

Wombat Forest Society

p.o.box 428 daylesford, 3461

ph/fax: 03 5348-1748

Incorporation No: ACN-A0029445N

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR BALLAN NEWS

The Wombat Forest Society will be holding a public meeting in Blackwood on Tuesday 27th November, at the Blackwood Community Hall, focussing on local issues. The meeting will concentrate on the inclusion of Upper Lerdederg areas into the Lerderderg National Park, the tourism buffer zone around Blackwood, Barry's Reef and Dales Creek and the extension of the Wombat Forest Drive. The Blackwood meeting is extremely important in the Wombat Forest Society's ongoing commitment to localised issues. The Upper Lerderderg area , in particular, is vital to a robust and healthy local environment. As well as the obvious environmental significance of these areas, the Wombat Forest is an integral component of any tourism development of these communities. The local community have close and passionate relationship with the forest. Hopefully, all these issues can be considered with a combined regional focus. The Wombat Forest Drive extension has the potential to link the existing forest drive, developed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, with the township of Blackwood. The meeting is open to all interested community members and begins at 7.30pm. Be there. The Wombat Forest needs us all.

Peter O'Mara
1 Second Street
Hepburn Springs
Wombat Forest Society
ph: 5348-1154

RESUME
Peter O'Mara

1 Second Street Hepburn Springs, 3461
Tel: 5348-1154 Fax: 5348-1748
email: petero@telstraeasymail.com.au

Education & Qualifications..

1997
Associate Diploma Of Professional Writing
Deakin University

1983-1988
Diploma Of Teaching (Primary)
Victoria College, Burwood

Relevant Work History..

1989-2000
Casual Relief Teacher
Primary School
40 Schools - Metro/Rural
Specialists Areas: Physical Education
Art
Mathematics

1986-2000
Home Tutor
Individual Students
Australian & Torres Strait Island Assistance Scheme

1986-1999
School Holiday Co-Ordinator
Northcote Council
Boorandorah Council
Hepburn Shire Council

1993-2000
Published Poet

Literary Journals
Including: Menijin, Overland & Redoubt

1996-2000
Visual Artist - Various Exhibitions
Powerhouse Art Space, Daylesford
Maryborough Community Arts
Pantechicon Gallery, Daylesford

1996-1999
Co-Editor
Cosy Poets Poetry Journal

Community Experience..

Current

Wombat Forest Society
Convenor/Secretary/Treasurer

Daylesford Skate Park Committee
Chairperson/Secretary

Western Victorian Forest
Protection Network
Convenor/Secretary

Hepburn Springs Action Group
Convenor/Secretary

Hepburn Football Club
Field Umpire

1996-2000
Daylesford Poetry Group
Convenor/Editor
Organiser - Six Performance Works

References..

David Broadbent
Principal
Daylesford Primary School
ph: (03) 5348-2480

Neil Bruce
Principal
Bullarto Primary School
ph: (03) 5348-5559

Wombat Forest Society

P.o.box 428 daylesford, 3461

ph/fax: 03 5348-1748

Incorporation No: ACN-A0029445N

PRESS RELEASE
MONDAY &TH AUGUST 2000

The Wombat Forest Society will be holding their Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, August 15th at the Powerhouse Art Space, Vincent Street Daylesford. The meeting will feature, Anthony Aamis, forest campaigner from Friends Of The Earth, Melbourne. Anthony is an experienced and well respected campaigner and will speak on Plantations and Timber Certification which are both important issues in relation to the future timber resource of the Wombat Forest.

"We are delighted to have Anthony speaking at our meeting. His extensive work on the plantation issue has provided many regional environment groups with important campaign background. He has been a strong proponent to the fact that we must not hastily replace the existing logging of native forests with a potentially environment damaging plantation resource. It is vital to get the mixture correct. The Wombat Forest Society has long endorsed the establishment of mixed species plantations that mimick a natural forest system based on reforestation rather than farming practices. The design and siting of these areas should entail full environmental, hydrological and social impact studies. We look forward to Anthony's views on such matters."

The Wombat Forest Society will be electing a new committe at the meeting and presenting all financial records for membership approval.

"Hopefully, we can attract some new members to our committee. Our next years work is vitally important in our push for sustainable logging in the Wombat Forest. We will continue to involve ourselves with the timber industry, government, DNRE and non-timber stakeholders and this requires a huge effort. We need more committed souls."

The Wombat Forest Society Annual General Meeting will begin at 7.30pm and light supper will follow. Any enquiries should contact the Wombat Forest Society on 5348-1748.

Peter O'Mara
Wombat Forest Society

Wombat Forest Society

P.O.Box 428 Daylesford, 3460

ph/fax: 03 5348-1748

Incorporation No: ACN-A0029445N

10th August, 2000

To: Mr Andrew Maclean
Regional Forests Manager
West Victoria

Dear Andrew,

I am writing to you regarding the development of the Bullarto walking track/education area. I have recieved a copy of your letter to Gary McIntosh stating that a detailed proposal should be provided to DNRE by November 6th, 2000. I believe that this to be an unrealistic expectation as both Gary and myself have only just began to identify and contact the various stakeholders as a part of an extensive consultative framework.

Already, both Gary and I have held positive preliminary talks with many people/groups and hope to have a stakeholders meeting in early October. On behalf of the Wombat Forest Society, I will be talking to the LaTrobe University Outdoor Education and Nature Tourism faculty and students next Tuesday regarding possible participation on the Bullarto project (see attached letter), followed by an organized field trip the next week. Our meeting will look at the proposed site and adjacent tourism stakeholders such as the Bullarto Mill and Daylesford Tourist Railway. The link with LaTrobe University is an exciting innovation in the Bullarto proposal which will require a greater timeframe that what you propose.

Additionally, the Wombat Forest Society has contacted Gerard O'Neill (DNRE), Michael Ronaldson (MHA-Ballarat), Geoff Howard (MLA-East Ballarat), Joanne Duncan (MLA-Gisborne), Paquita Larmacraft & Geoff Ryan (Hepburn Shire Tourism), Daylesford Fine Timbers, Daylesford Tourist Railways. Graeme Harding (Local Sawmiller) and Neil Bruce (Principal-Bullarto Primary School) with an extremely positive response in relationship to development, implementation and funding of the project.

Obviously, this project will take considerable time to be inclusive of all these stakeholders and stretch the voluntary participatory capacity of Gary and myself. Furthermore, the original 1995 reserve had no stipulation of the development of a walking/educational area but rather as a supplement to the extension of the Daylesford Tourist Railway.

The Wombat Forest Society is asking that you immediately withdraw your timetable request and provide a more positive framework for this community project. We would appreciate a reply within the next few weeks if possible.

Peter O'Mara

Wombat Forest Society
P.O.Box 428 Daylesford, 3460
ph/fax: 03 5348-1748
Incorporation No: ACN-A0029445N

Acknowledgement Of Place

To start the official proceedings, I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Jarra country of which the members and elders of the Djada Wurrung community and their forebearers have been custodians for many centuries and on which the Djada Wurrong or Jarra people have performed aged old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.

ATTENTION: LEANNE FRY
THE ADVOCATE

The Daylesford S11 Demonstration Forum, focusing on the local impacts of globalisation, was well attended by sixty people last Thursday. The information/strategy meeting was provided with background of the inequalities of the push toward market-based globalisation by international trade campaigner Serena O'Melley of the Geelong Community Forum.
"The greedy push toward globalisation has huge implications for small rural communities. All living costs, such as petrol, food, services and medical supplies, are now at the mercy of deals done by unelected and unaccountable corporate bullies. Most governments worldwide, including Australia, have downgraded their decision making amid regulatory inputs , allowing global corporations with an unfair advantage into local markets. Any unregulated international trade will place extreme pressure on small traditional producers that exist in rural Victoria. There is a dangerous threat to the basic fabric of rural living. Ultimately, we will see local producers having to take shortcuts, which will effect local environmental considerations, just to compete with these unfair marketing advantages provided to global multinationals."
Tristy Fairfield, Friends Of The Earth S11 Co-Ordinator, expressed the need to protest against the corporate-defined globalisation advocated by meetings like the World Economic Forum on September 11. She encouraged any local protest group or community individuals to join the Friends Of The Earth non-violent blockade of the Crown Casino during the WEF meeting.

"We invite everyone to join us in a 'green block' which will form a discreet part of the non-violent blockade around the Crown Casino. We wish to maintain an autonomous blockade under the broader S11 umbrella, which is targeted, peaceful with clear focus, and good liaison with police and other activist groups operating around us. From this area, we will be co-ordinating our own action that compliments the overall S11 blockade to stop the World Economic Forum. We are organising peacekeeping training and briefing everyone on non-violent protest techniques. If you don't wish to be part of the direct blockade, you will have the option of joining the supportive presence beyond the police lines."

Leading permaculturist, David Holmgren, gave an inspired address, explaining why he believed that this particular rally was the most important in many years. He said that the basic energy sources behind the last fifty years of unsustainable world economic growth would soon be diminished to critical levels. The S11 protest presented an opportunity to project ways for the world to be re-built using positive visionary alternatives such as permaculture.

Local residents, Cate Kennedy and Ken Mansell, sang related protest songs, and the meeting concluded with a positive flurry of proposals. A huge banner will be painted this Thursday at Continental House begimnning at 11.30am. Leaflets are being distributed to all local farmers. Next Monday morning, Daylesford people travelling to Melbourne to attend the S11 protest will meet at 6 am at the Daylesford Post Office. A community car pool will travel to the Ballan Railway Station for the Melbourne bound train. The Daylesford S11 group will meet up with other country groups from Geelong, Castlemaine and Bendigo, and prominent union leaders, at Spencer Street station at 8.15 am and march together to the Rally. Also, the Daylesford group will set up a "Barter Market", in the Friends Of The Earth meeting area and take part in the open stage platform, addressing the issues affecting rural Victorians. Any additional information, please call Peter O'Mara 5348-1154 or Ken Mansell 54764492.

West Victorian Forest Protection Network
P.O. Box 428, Daylesford, 3460

11th September, 2000

To: Gerard O'Neill
DNRE
8 Nicholson Street
East Melbourne, 3002

Dear Gerard,

The Western Victorian Forest Protection Network, consisting of 23 member groups, would like to provide some comment on the Royalities Review Terms Of Reference.

1. The government should invite public submissions rather than appoint 'appropriate stakeholders'
2. All debts and liabilities to the State Of Victoria must be fully disclosed
3. There should be a declaration of all subsidies and public management costs currently associated with the logging industry, including
...research and development costs
...external environmental damage costs including those associated with off-site sedimentation of streams and adverse impacts upon water quality and supply
...estimates of non-financial values impacted upon by logging
...estimates of lost revenue due to impacts upon other industries including, but not limited to, tourism, recreational fishing and sporting pursuits
...the costs of meeting environmental regulations
...the costs of regeneration, including losses associated with failed regeneration
...costs associated with roading
...costs associated with preventing and fighting fires in logging coupes, or fires exacerbated by logging operations
...long-distance transport subsidies
...tax breaks on vehicles, plant and equipment
...lost rentals and rates on public land
...estimates of losses due to artificially low log pricing
...disclosure of staffing, management, equipment and rental costs associated with providing administrative, accounting and scientific expertise which facilitates the logging industry
...disclosure of related government consultancy fees
...estimates of the impact which market demand (both locally and internationally) has upon pricing mechanisms within the industry

4. There should be a commitment to implementing a full commercial accounting system within the departments responsible for managing the logging industry. The costs of designing and implementing this system should be fully disclosed
5. The review must cover the last 20years of forest operations
6. In addition to the Minister for Conservation and Environment, the outcome of the review should also be considered by the Minister for Finance
and the Regulator General.

Yours Sincerely

Peter O'Mara
Community Liaison Officer
ph: 5348-1154

Wombat Forest Society
Suggested Aims & Objectives

* sustainable native forest management within the context of the carrying capacity of the land with relationship of broader environmental considerations

* To balance broad needs of human communities and wildlife of forests

*stop industrialised forest management and logging

* community forest management

* social justice

* research & challenge agency of forest management

* facilitate inclusive local interaction with the forest

* provide regional support to other non-timber stakeholders

* oppose current woodchipping practices

* end export woodchipping

* investigate restoration/reforestation possibilities

Western Victorian Forest Protection Network
P.O.Box 428 Daylesford, 3460
ph/fax: 03 5348-1748

Incorporation No: A0037400L

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY
p.o.box 428
daylesford
ph/fax: 5348-1748

press release

The Wombat Forest Society is threatening to undertake immediate direct forest action regarding the proposed logging in Osbornes Road, Bullarto. The Bullarto coupe, the fifth neighbouring one in a to be logged, exists within a Powerful Owl Special Management Zone, which should provide a minimum of 500 hectares of thirty year old forest. The Wombat Forest Society analysis of this particular management area shows that most of this Special Management Zone has already undergone phase one of Shelterwood harvesting. The Shelterwood system was introduced in 1974, therefore we can clearly demonstrate that this area is unrepresented in relation to the Department of Natural Resources & Environment's own requirements and in breach of the recently signed West Victorian Regional Forest Agreement. After our initial complaint, DNRE has now reinterpreted what constitutes a 30 year old forest, negating a less intense shelterwood harvest from the equation. The management problems regarding this Special Management Zone were first raised with DNRE in July 2000 and the logging crew were immediately pulled from the Osborne Road logging coupe leaving many felled trees behind.

"The Wombat Forest Society has no problems with the logging crew removing these felled trees in the interim period, but are adamant that no further logging should take place until DNRE has adequately dealt with our concerns. In July, DNRE senior management made a commitment to the Wombat Forest Society to resolve this issue by providing a workshop to collectively analysis the harvested areas within the Powerful Owl Special Management Zone. Unbelievably, they have only just set up the workshop this Tuesday, the very day that the contractors have been told to recommence logging. This is a provocative action and will leave local community in an unavoidable stand-off," says Tim Anderson, President, Wombat Forest Society.

"The logging crew and the local DNRE staff now have to face an angry community response. This inadequate situation is a complete insult to the Wombat Forest Society's responsible campaign approach to local forest issues and we are now faced with the prospect of our first direct action against local workers. The questions hanging over this Special Management Zone should only take a day or two to resolve. We believe

that the logging contractors have been wrongly advised by DNRE that this situation has been resolved. The Wombat Forest Society are asking that DNRE immediately endorse a logging moratorium in the Bullarto coupe until we all sit down and work through the management requirements. For too long, the decisions over contentious issues have been given inadequate community input resulting in logging taking precedent over the environment."

The Wombat Forest Society will conducting a monitoring program beginning on Monday, 16th October, 2000 at 10 am to ensure that no further logging is undertaken before these outstandingissues are resolved. Any queries, contact Tim Anderson on 5348-1748 or Peter O'Mara on 5348-1154

Sorry if people have this already. I sent this out to the Vic forest list last week and it bounced back today. We still need people to contact AKF and demand to know why there is no local input in their ' scientific' study and why their study isn't opened up for independent peer review.
Regards Anthony

PRESS RELEASE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2000

ALARM BELLS RING OVER FORESTRY MEMORANDUM

Environmental organisation , Friends of the Earth, today questioned the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Hancock Victorian Plantations and the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) saying that the MOU would not be worth the paper it was written on if local environment groups and experts on the Victorian koala were not properly consulted.

Spokesperson for FoE Forest Network Anthony Amis said “It seems very odd that both Hancock and the AKF have so far avoided consulting with local environment groups over this issue, particulary Friends of the Gippsland Bush and local residents who have many years experience about these matters. It would appear that AKF are now cashing in on all the hard work that many locals have done for years trying to protect the Strzelecki koala”.

The Memorandum signed earlier this year provides a framework for obtaining supposedly scientifically credible data on koala populations, critical habitat and future habitat needs. In a press release issued on the 2nd of October by HVP,it states that field studies would begin on the 2nd October, headed by AKF’s John Callahan, along with zookeepers from five major North American zoos: Toronto, San Francisco, Bergin, San Diego and Disney’s Animal Kingdom. Wayne Marion, wildlife manager for Hancock Timber Resource Group, also would participate.

“Just where is the local input?” Mr Amis asked. “It appears that Hancock and AKF are not properly assessing community knowledge about this issue. What existing data are they drawing on? Surely to determine whether koala habitat is being harmed, field work would have to take place in every forest coupe that Hancock plan to log. It also appears that radio tracking will not be used in the study either, making it impossible to determine koala range. The study will only work from random samples. As far as we can tell the methodology of the study will not be made public either. Without knowing the methodology and by not having the process open to independent scientific peer review, it would appear that both the AKF and Hancock are attempting to stifle public comment on the process. The whole process sounds rather suspect to our organisation. It appears to be a smokescreen”.

“We have serious concerns that by not properly accessing community knowledge about the Strzelecki koala, both HVP and Hancock could be seen to be attempting to pull the wool over people’s eyes. Friends of the Earth’s concerns are that local knowledge is not being requested because Hancock are solely interested in getting access to the Mountain Ash trees in the higher elevations. Local residents have for years pointed out that Strzelecki Koalas are found in Mountain Ash habitat. We fear that the ‘study’ could be interpreted as meaning that singular stands of Mountain Ash will not be regarded as important habitat, thereby allowing HVP to log these few remaining areas”. Mr Amis said.

Mr Amis concluded by saying that “HVP have been saying that they want their forest holdings certified in Victoria by the Forest Stewardship Council. That process requires all parties including conservationists, indigenous people, workers and industry to reach agreement over forest management. We see the AKF/HVP agreement as working against the interests of certification in that HVP are setting up a knowledge hierarchy where they will consult with one group at the expense of other

groups".
For further information on these issues, including details of Hancock's logging in the Strzelecki's over the past two years - check the website: www.forests.org.au/strzelecki/
For further comments contact Anthony Amis on (03) 9419 8700
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Subject: [WestRFA] paperlinx up for sale?

Folks - I sent this to the national forest list last week. My apologies for cross posting.
Apparently PaperlinX* is planning to sell off its plantations - plus more? Earlier this year Amcor 'spun-off' its paper operations into a company called PaperlinX. Rumour has it that PaperlinX may be taken over by Hancock, or the Maryvale pulp-plant sold to Hancock, or the Maryvale plant will be closed and PaperlinX will make paper with imported pulp. Whatever the outcome potential buyers should be made aware of what they are actually buying into"
*PaperlinX are the only producer of fine writing paper in Australia - eg photocopy and computer printing paper
PRESS RELEASE 11/10/00
BUYERS OF PAPERLINX PLANTATIONS COULD BE UP FOR HUGE INFRASTRUCTURE
COSTS
Recent rumours suggesting that paper company PaperlinX may soon be taken over by a US buyer will have serious ramifications for that buyer says environmental organisation Friends of the Earth (FoE). A recent field trip to PaperlinX plantations in the Strzelecki Ranges on October 1st revealed massive infrastructure problems. These problems included sub-standard roading and culverting, inadequate drains, land slumping down hillsides and landslides.
Friends of the Earth Forest Network spokesperson Anthony Amis said "The extent of the destruction was unbelievable. It was clear that the land was eroding away before our eyes. The roading was extremely shoddy, meaning that to get the roads up to the standard of the Code of Forest Practices - the legal document governing forestry operations in Victoria - a huge amount of money would have to be invested. We estimated that new roads, culverts and drains on that one forest area alone would cost many many thousands of dollars. PaperlinX has something like 80,000 hectares of plantations. Local environment groups have also stated that the coupe we visited on October 1st is not unusual. Many other plantations are in a similar bind.
"You have to remember that PaperlinX is sitting on very old logging infrastructure. Many of the roads were established prior to the Code of Forest Practices being established and are therefore sub-standard. Costs for improving these sites will add up to many millions of dollars. Meanwhile the environmental problems associated with such poor forestry operations are monumental. All of this erosion has serious impacts on all downstream users of water coming from these plantations. FoE believes that forest owners may also be up for legal challenges over water quality issues in the near future. Water testing at the plantation site between the east and west branch of the Jeeralang Creek measured between 800 and 1300 NTU. An exceptionally high reading" said Mr Amis.
Hancock Victorian Plantations, the other major forest owner in the Strzelecki's has been dogged by environmental problems since they purchased the assets of the Victorian Plantation Corporation in November 1998. "We predicted that Hancock would encounter all sorts problems and our predictions have come true" said Mr Amis. "Hancock are currently being threatened with legal action by the local shire and their $130 billion insurance business in the United States is coming under boycott because of their destruction of koala habitat in the Strzelecki's. Apparently Hancock were told nothing about the significance of the Strzelecki's prior to buying the rights to log their land holdings by the Kennett government. "We understand that Hancock has even gone to

the Bracks Government to get the Government to buy the Strzelecki's back from them" said Mr Amis. "The Bracks Government refused". "The buyers of PaperlinX will buy into even larger problems than what Hancock is facing" Mr Amis warned.

For further information about Hancock's activities in the Strzeleckis look up the following website: www.forests.org.au/strzelecki/

For further information call Anthony Amis on (03) 9419 8700

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Wombat Forest Society

p.o.box 428 daylesford, 3460

ph/fax: 03 5348-1748

Incorporation No: ACN-A0029445N

14th December, 2000

Dear Victor

The Wombat Forest Society would like to express their concern with the initial consultative process for the proposed Spa Complex on Ballan Road Daylesford, Application No. 2000/6508. Upon looking at the application proposal, it would appear that the proposal application is inadequate. The $18 million proposal developers provide as much detail as that required for a suburban block. The Wombat Forest Society would like that the applicant provide more detail especially in relation to environmental considerations. Any large development could have serious effect on the mineral springs resource and local forest habitat. Also, we are disappointed that the consultative meeting is to be held in the busy week proceeding Christmas and at the awkward time of 5pm making it difficult to attend. We look forward to future participation in the consultative process.

Regards

Wombat Forest Society
p.o.box 428 daylesford, 3460
ph/fax: 03 5348-1748

PRESS RELEASE
15TH DECEMBER, 2000

The Wombat Forest Society's ongoing campaign to increase public awareness about local forest issues will continue into the New Year with a Family Forest Camp being organised for the weekend, January 20-21, 2000. The proposed Wombat Forest camp will be held in a designated camping area within the Wombat Forest depending on water availibility, fire restrictions and local habitat requirements.

"The Wombat Forest Society has indentified several excellent site possibilities within close proximity of the Daylesford township to enable family friendly accessibility. Obviously, we will have to remain flexible enough to local environmental considerations before making our final selection. All interested faimilies will be given final notification a week prior to the camp commencing. We have already contacted local police, DNRE and hospitals ot ensure that all safety requirements have been met. Detailed maps will be provided in mid-January," says

Wombat Forest Society spokesperson, Jenny McCulloch.

"The Wombat Forest Society Camp activities will be focissing on community forest participation, fauna and flora indentification and water issues. We also hope to have local indigenous participation. Hopefully, camp particpants will also bring their own skills and knowledge and share these with other interested people. We have arranged for people to bring their musical instruments and other equipment to make this a unique forest experience. Any creative approach can only further enhance real local involvement in the Wombat Forest. Our local forests need us all."

Any interested person/family can ring the Wombat Forest Society to register on 5348-1748 or 5348-1154 anytime.

VICTORIAN SAW LOG FARMING PROJECT

The Wombat Forest Society continues its involvement in the West Victorian RFA plantation project, now known as the Victorian Saw Log Farming Project. This project was initiated by the Victorian Government as a post Regional Forest Agreement strategy to secure future opportunities for an alternative sawlog resource. These sawlog plantations would be strategically integrated to provide other benefits such as salinity, erosion and weed control, as well as improved agricultural productivity and biodiversity. In many ways, the project represents an exciting and innovative approach to the issue of private forestry. Ultimately, the project aims to establish in the order of 10000 ha of plantations for sawlog production on cleared agricultural land in North Central, Western and Southern Victoria, providing a future resource for timber mills currently relying on the Wombat Forest for timber.

The Wombat Forest Society representatives have been advocating a resource based on reafforestation principles (ie. mixed species & multi-aged) in which the plantation is sited as to provide sustainable environment and whole community outcomes. The VSLFP has the opportunity to provide a creative mix of farm forestry and integrated plantations. The community consultation/communication module of the project has provided for some innovative approaches, including a local focus meeting organised by the Wombat Forest Society. This meeting was attended by interested community stakeholders from Hepburn Springs, Blackwood, Wheatsheaf, Little Hampton, Greendale, Guilford and Newlyn, investigating varied perceptions and aspirations. This information has been fed into the Community Consultation and Communication module, which is an approach that has often been overlooked in previous DNRE process.

The Wombat Forest Society is represented on the Community Consultation and Communication Module committee by Peter O'Mara and on the the Victorian Saw Log Farming Project steering committee by Tim Anderson. Any further details about this project can be made available by contacting the Wombat Forest Society office.

Wood Utilisation Plan

The Wombat Forest Society is most disappointed with the current Wood Utilsation Plan (WUPS) for the Wombat Forest, 2001-2004. Although some of our previous concerns have been withdrawn from the proposed logging schedule, the current plan still represents an overlogging of the local Wombat Forest. Find below, the Wombat Forest Society submission to the draft WUP's which will provide a backbone of our campaign and lobbying strategy over the next logging season. The Wombat Forest Society held a WUP's workshop at our August meeting and hope to hold another seminar early next year. We have been disappointed with the initial response to our concerns by DNRE and are detailing a campaign strategy around these issues. We welcome any inputs/suggestions regarding approach.

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY
Submission for Proposed Wood Utilisation Plan 2001/04

The Wombat Forest Society would take to take the opportunity to raise a number of issues relative to the proposed coupe schedule contained in the proposed WUPs.
>1. That the area scheduled for 'Non-merchantable tree treatment' is too large. The Wombat Forest is an important area for its biodiversity values.
For this amount of area to be covered by human activities, and particularly the methodical and comprehensive activities that non-merchantable tree treatment entail, is not acceptable. The WFS request detail on what this treatment means. Is it stem injection or does some of this treatment result in the production of material that ends up becoming woodchips?
The WFS recognises the need for this remedial silvicultural treatment to be done carried out, but so much in so little time appears to be another instance of NRE's perpetual management that prioratises the need for a dominant timber production approach over natural values. The WFS rejects this.
>2. There are a number of Seedtree coupes across the Wombat. The modeling carried in 1995/7 as part of the Midlands Sustainable Yield Review identified these areas as medium/high productivity. Most of these areas are modeled as being for shelterwood. As a result they are assumed to produce an average of 47m3 ha on the second cut. If NRE intends to now redefine site quality and carry out seedtree harvesting, NRE must carry a deficit into the future of -47m3 ha to be taken off sawlog allocations ten years from now. A failure to do this will result in serious impacts on future timber volumes.
NRE personnel have put to the Wombat Forest Society that the 1995/7 modeling is no longer used. This is in fact incorrect. The RFA carried out its TRA (Timber Resource Assessment), which reassessed the low-yielding reason of the Midlands, and clearly left in the 1995/7 sustainable yield review assumptions for Wombat medium/high. On this basis the assumption of 47m3 ha is still required to be met.
>3. The proportion of B-grade logs supplied is too high. Although a lot of the coupes are SW2, the proportion reflects that NRE is continuing to supply specified log grades to the main mill, Black Forest. The independent consultant's report carried in the RFA in response to WFS concerns, states that there is no 'legal obligation' to supply grade.The chase for quality logs is the main reason that the Midlands FMA has no future. To perpetuate this practice is unacceptable and may be legally challengeable. NRE may argue that Shelterwood 2 (SW2) produces a higher proportion of quality logs. This is in fact contradicted by the reality that some current SW2 cuts are producing under 20m3 ha, and that the average is around ½ of what the model requires This reflects a failure to leave the required basal area/standing volume in SW1 cuts. This has been identified in numerous Wombat Forest Society submissions. Just because industry took too much (their fault or NRE's, in the marking of the coupe) on the firstly cut, they should not be

allowed to then log excessive areas on the second cut to make up volume. Scheduling should assume 47m3 ha, as identified in the sustainable yield review. If the coupe produces less, then the industry should be compensated for the shortfall. You cannot fall more area to make up shortfalls. This is the heart of what has stuffed the Midlands, and on Wombat Forest Society evidence, most of the rest of the State. This compensation should be limited to the mills that have not driven the over-harvesting of the B-grade sawlogs.
>4. The WFS recognises that NRE have quickly reduced volumes in the Midlands down to the temporary levels set in the RFA. The WFS wants to put on the record its concern that the current volumes are still unsustainable, and therefore technically illegal. This needs to be taken into account in relation to any legal actions taken on people that voice protest at the logging of individual coupes. Any legal action, can and will be successfully defended on the ultimate basis of 'its unsustainable therefore it's illegal'. A legal case will be an ideal opportunity to bring in expert witnesses to the excesses of past forest utilisation and to establish the proof of unsustainablity.
>5. That the proposed harvesting on Mt Babbington is in conflict with NRE's requirements to maintain visual amenity, as identified in the RFA. Given that recent logging has severely compromised to visual aesthetics of Mt Babbington, no logging should take place in the area until the regeneration in these areas has repaired the damage.(20 years.)
>6. The WFS supports the submissions made by the communities of Trentham and Blackwood, calling for specific coupes to be withdrawn from logging due to their importance for non-timber related values.
>7. The WFS rejects the intensity and clusters of coups scheduled to take place between Daylesford and Blackwood. This concentration is unacceptable, due to its impacts in relation to catchments, biodiversity and tourism/recreational opportunities.
>8. The WFS calls for a scientific ruling on the applicability of SW2 cuts to the exemption of adjacency criteria under the Code of Forest Practices and catchment considerations. The Code, Management Plan and RFA make no distinction or exemption from these criteria between SW1 & SW2. The WFS does not accept an arbitrary exemption.
>9. Due to the proven unsustainability of the Midlands the WFS does not accept that timber volumes are to be maintained at the expense of other values, as is the current situation.

NRE is required to maintain a suite of values in its management of our State Forests. Over-harvesting in the past, which has in fact given the industry more volumes in the past than they should have had access to, and therefore greater financial returns. The maintenance of unsustainable volumes that are seriously compromising/destroying non-timber values does not reflect unbiased forest management.
It is WFS policy to defend and contest forest management/utilisation actions that favor timber unfairly over non-timber values. The past unbalanced management & utilisation for timber and woodchip production needs to be accounted for and balanced out. This will implicitly mean decisions need to now favor the non-timber values over timber volume supply. Calls for coupes with 'High Conservation Values' to be deferred from harvesting are not unreasonable. The over harvesting, de fcato means that some non-timber values will have been impacted in a way that is contrary to NRE's management requirements under State and Federal Legislation.
>10. The WFS makes an overall complaint over the amount the area scheduled to have logging or treatment on it. The WUPs show that around 10% of the total net productive area are to be done in 1 year and 30% in 3 years.
This is too disruptive to our forests.
The WFS rejects totally the WUPs on this basis alone.
>Tim Anderson.

NATIONAL FOREST SUMMIT

The 18th National Forest Summit (NFS), held in conjunction, by the Wombat Forest Society and the Native Forest Network, was a huge success. Held in Hepburn Springs (April 27-29), the NFS was attended by over 100 representatives from more than 35 environmental groups working on forest issues throughout Australia. The Wombat Forest Society has been a long time supporter and participant of these summits, recognising the need for cooperative, yet robust, communication & campaign strategies amongst forest groups. The Continental Guest House provided a wonderful location for a three-day talkfest on all things forests, including plantation certification, biomass, community monitoring, sustainablility, woodchipping, old growth protection and Federal election strategy. The food was yummy, thanks to Alexis, Jesse & Kali, ensuring a full body/sound mind approach. The Continental's eclectic record collection and disco ball provided an evening time warp with older campaigners and young alike finding a common beat. Well maybe not so common. Some wonderful moments! On a more serious note, the National Forest Summit participants made some importnt shared campaign strategies.

In the wake of the Western Australia and Queensland election results, the two main issues identified by the Summit as being key indicators of the Liberal and Labor Parties' commitment to protecting forests in the lead up to the Federal election are:

* ending the logging and woodchipping of old growth forests across Australia
* rejecting the woodchip industry's push for burning forests for power.

The Summit continues its commitment to oppose the use of any native forest products in the generation of power, and its continued commitment to ending the native forest export woodchip industry.

To prevent forests from being burned for power, amending the Renewable Energy (Electricity Act) is a major priority. The NFS will focus its campaign efforts on removing native forests from the list of eligible Renewable Energy sources..

A strong commitment was made by the Summit to build community awareness of the fate of our old growth forests in Tasmania, Victoria and NSW. The Summit will be calling for Federal support to protect these irreplaceable ancient forests.

The Australian Forestry Standard was also rejected by Summit participants as a government process designed to deliver business as usual to the forest destructive industries. Following up on its previous commitment to develop a standard for independent, third party certification of plantation management in Australia, the NFS has agreed to investigate participating in a Forest Stewardship Council -type process for plantation and agroforest certification.

PROPOSED IN PRINCIPLE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON PLANTATION CERTIFICATION
ENDORSED BY THE NATIONAL FOREST SUMMT.

The NFS agrees in principle to investigate an FSC-type certification process for plantations and agroforests. The NFS agrees to develop a co-ordinating committee which will form technical working groups to assist its participation in the certification process.

The working groups will:

* Develop this document with the intention of sending it out for peer review.
* Develop an agreed definition of terms.
* Develop guidelines for a consultative process which enables an effective and representative ENGO sectoral participation within an FSC-type National Initiative format.

The agreed goals, hopes and expectations of the process are to:

* Improve the environmental, social and economic performance of industrial producers and plantation owners/managers;
* Encourage development of the farm forestry sector;

* Explore a process to further differentiate "environmentally preferred" products in the marketplace;
* Incorporate principles of management planning to ecological restoration and ecological sustainability across the landscape to address environmental degradation (eg salinity);
* Reduce the pressures on native forests by supporting the goals of the National Forest Summit namely: ending woodchipping of native forests and protecting high conservation value forests whilst supporting the maximum commercially feasible use of existing plantations - under ESD principles;
* End clearing of native vegetation;
* Foster increased levels of community participation in landscape mapping and planning, with all stakeholders able to participate on an equitable basis;
* Ensure plantation management contributes to the social, cultural and long-term economic wellbeing of the community, especially local and Indigenous communities and in particular traditional owners;
* Operate under the principles of the Earth Charter [See http://www.earthcharter.org];
* To have open access to all relevant information and data, including from Government agencies.

OFFICE WORKS

The Wombat Forest Society office at the Powerhouse, Daylesford is slowly evolving. The office now contains a desk, carpet, some chairs, tea/coffee, cups but not much else. Any donation of office equipment would be most welcome. Hopefully, the phone/fax/email/ computer will be set up soonish, depending on financial resources. The side entrance has been cleared and hopefully, the office space will soon be fully operational within the next month. If anyone has some energy for renovations or building materials, please let us know. One again, thanks to the Powerhouse crew for their generous contribution to our campaign efforts. Much appreciated.....

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Wombat Forest Society Annual General Meeting will be held at Daylesford Neighbourhood House, Camp Street, Daylesford on , beginning at 7.30pm. The AGM will provide opportunity for any member to join the Wombat Forest Society committee on the particular night or by proxy (See Form Below). The guest speaker at our AGM will be well known permauculturist David Holmgren, talking about..... It promises to be an fromative presentation.

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY

p.o.box 428, daylesford, 3460

Nomination Form

For: President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer
2 Ordinary Members Of The Committee

I (Full Name), hereby nominate (Full Name) for the position of of the Wombat Forest SocietyInc.

.....(Signature)
.....(Date)

I (Full Name), hereby second the nomination of (Full Name) for the position of of the Wombat Forest Society Inc.

.....(Signature)
.....(Date)

I (Full Name), hereby consent to my nomination for the position of of the Wombat Forest Society Inc.

.....(Signature)
.....(Date)

NOTE All persons nominating, seconding or being nominated on this form must be current financial members of the Wombat Forest Society Inc.

.....HELLO EVERYONE.....

Hello Members & Friends & welcome to our September newsletter. The Wombat Forest Society continues to work hard, providing community focus toward many environmental issues. In April, we held the National Forest Summit, in conjunction with the Native Forest Network, attended by 120 people from throughout Australia. Also, we had representatives from NewZealand and Japan. The National Forest Summit was held at the Continental Guest House, Hepburn Springs and was a huge success in both campaign and human outcomes. A Plantation Certification conference was held prior to the summit, at The Springs Hotel, Hepburn Springs. Our major fundraising effort, the Wombat Forest Society raffle, a linocut of a Powerful Owl by wildlife illustrator, Rob Mancini, was drawn with much anticipation during the Summit. A huge thank-you to everyone involved!!! The Wombat Forest Society has begun to finalise strategies for the next logging season, as well as continue our community education and workshop program. Our community education program has included Wombat Forest camps, Code Of Forest Practice and Wood Utilisation Plan workshops. Our approach is to empower interested people on Wombat Forest issues by providing opportunity for participation for all community members. Additionally, community participants also bring their own skills and knowledge to share. Any inclusive approach can only further enhance real local involvement in the Wombat Forest. The Wombat Forest belongs to us all.
Happy Reading!!

TREASURERS REPORT

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The Wombat Forest Society finances received a huge boost with the highly successful *Powerful Owl linocut* raffle drawn on April 29, 2001. The raffle, well organised by John Endacott, raised $1300 which helped offset some outstanding debts and finance some other campaign costs, including this newsletter. Our membership renewals and donations continue to increase. Our new office will require some initial funding including computer upgrade & internet, but hopefully a more centralized operation will be cost beneficial. At the moment, we are investigating how we can become a tax-deductable donation so as to attract some alternative funding opportunities. As always, the Wombat Forest Society continues to operate on a minimal budget and the kindness and generousity of members and supporters

ENFIELD FOREST UPDATE

The Enfield Forest Alliance, met with Geoffrey Scales and Peter Keppel on July 4th, the purpose of this meeting was to discuss a change in harvesting for this years W.U.P's The decision has been made to hold over this years coupes of 2 x 25 Ha. Seed Tree. A preferred choice of Group and Patch System will proceed at Hard Hills and Argyle, instead.This more sensitive approach is most welcome However there will be an area increaseof 20% in coupes harvested with this system, to maintain maximum quota's. DNRE would like to take more but that is not permissible under the present R F A. Discussions continued at the Monmouth Coupe, a mature forest area that was selectively thinned in 1999 Peter Keppel told us that present research indicates that full sunlight was not required to promote slow growing quality timber in the Enfield Forest therefore, CLEARFELLING WITHIN THE ENFIELD FOREST WILL CEASE. This will apply from 2002 and will put into place an entirely different concept from the past procedures.

Peter Keppel insisted that a Landscape System of harvesting would always have been his choice for the Enfield Forest. Harvesting would move to Landscape in 2002 on the recommendation of Peter Keppel

2.3. 8 Protection of Landscape Values.

a.. in areas of high landscape sensitivity*, adverse visual impact should be minimised by modification of coupe* design and distribution.

The objective is to blend harvesting scenes with natural features of the landscape and minimise skyline impact;

b.. Landscape values should be protected along major tourist roads within constraints imposed by fire protection requirements.

We also took the opportunity to revisit the contentious Victoria Rd coupe harvested September 4th 2000 code breaches were discussed and our concern of rehabilitation of this site will be addressed. We touched base on several issues from seed collection coppice growth and community needs. The debate moved to the issue of local employment, there is no provision for Small Local Timber Industries.As future timber extraction will require specific machinery for mature tree harvesting only. Small operators would not be equipped for this, and in turn this would present a health and safety issue for D.N R E

In conclusion we concurred on the facts, that society would determine the Forest's Future,but in the mean time Midlands Forest Management Area coupes are given over to commercial timber production and are destined for severe alteration from their natural state.what ever that state may be at this point of time.This is clearly understood by environmentalists and the Forestry Division of D.N.R.E. Therefore The Enfield Forest Alliance will assert our right to be a pressure group for changes and a conclusion to Native Forest Timber Harvesting. Our meeting has been noted as a turning point for Enfield Forest Alliance. Geoffrey Scales saying " it was a pleasure to tell us what we wanted to hear" Let's SEE what tomorrow Brings.

VICTORIAN PLANTATION MANAGEMENT POSITION STATEMENT

The Wombat Forest Society has been working with other Victorian forest groups to establish a shared policy document in relation to plantation resources. At the 2000 National Forest Summit, it was recognised that the policy objectives adopted at the 1999 National Forest Summit on plantations needed to be elaborated upon to produce a detailed position on plantation management. The Wombat Forest Society have long campaigned that any future plantation resource should have whole environmental management guidelines, espeically in relation to water. At its February 2001 general meeting, the West Victorian Forest Protection Network, including the Wombat Forest Society, decided to take up the challenge of co-ordinating an inclusive process of policy development on the plantation issue.

The development of a Victorian position on plantation management has been urgent due to the absence of environmental prescriptions within State and Federal Government policy on plantation establishment. The Private Forestry Council (Victoria) is currently reviewing its plantation policy so this is an important moment for the Environment Movement to present them with directions on environmental management issues.

The principles outlined in this Victorian Plantation Management Statement document aim to set a standard of environmentally sound management for plantations which is worlds-best-practice. These principles in this document do not constitute a certification standard. Support for the principles outlined in this document by environmental groups does not imply that native forest campaigners do not support the use of the existing plantation resource. Any Implementation of these principles is intended to complement native forest conservation objectives. The document relaises that all agricultural production needs to shift to a socially and environmentally sustainable footing. In setting a high planning and environmental framework for plantations we are aiming to encourage the plantation sector to lead the way for the agricultural sector. We are aware that the applicability of these principles with regard to small-scale farm forestry may still need to be addressed. Ultimately, it is hoped that the Victorian Plantation Mangement Position Statement will encourage policy setting bodies including governments,

industry, unions, water authorities and non-government organisations to engage with this position paper when considering the plantation issue in their processes of policy development.

In April 2001 a preliminary draft document, compiled from a range of policy sources and egroup (electronic mailing list) discussions, was written and circulated by e-mail to interested individuals from the two main Victorian forest campaign egroups. Individuals with specialist knowledge were also approached for their advice. Suggestions from participants were incorporated into the document or were held over for discussion.

On April 7 2001, the Victorian Plantation Management Reference Group met for the first time and worked through the draft document. A further two weeks of personal consultation with individual campaigners saw the completion of the Interim Victorian Plantation Management Position Statement (April 2001). At the National Forest Summit (27-29 April 2001) the following motion was passed

"The National Forest Summit welcomes the work of the Victorian Plantation Management Reference Group towards developing a joint position on plantations and encourages interested Victorian groups to become involved."

The Victorian Plantation Management Position Statement (April 2001) is endorsed by the following campaign groups:
West Victorian Forest Protection Network, Friends of the Earth (Victoria), Concerned Residents of East Gippsland, Geelong Community Forum, Western Region Environment Centre, Paperlinx Green Shareholders Group, Tambo Environment Awareness Group, Wombat Forest Society, Environment Victoria, Cobaw and Wombat Forest Action Group, Wilderness Society, Portland Field Naturalists, Hamilton Field Naturalists, Otways Regional Environment Network, Enfield Forest Alliance, Goongerah Environment Centre.
The Australian Conservation Foundation support the development of the Position Statement and will be referring it back through their consultative bodies for endorsement. The Victorian Plantation Management Reference Group recognises that the development of a joint position on such a complex issue is an ongoing process which requires extensive and sensitive consultation with all stakeholders. Further development of the Position Statement will be undertaken in consultation with participating groups.
The Wombat Forest Society acknowledge the wonderful contribution of Serena O'Meley in facilitating this important document and a copy of the document or further information can be obtained from our office.

****

ECONOMY ECONOMY ECONOMY

Henk Bak

****

The two sides of the forest debate seem to have one thing in common: a flawed sense of 'economy'. *Logging is good for the economy* versus *The economy destroys the forest.*
The economy: *culprit or saviour.....*
In this opposition the notion 'economy' has been reduced in stages: first to 'business' , then to 'profit', finally 'shareholders'- gain.' From public housekeeping function economy has become private money making operation.
So, when citizens protest against *economy-driven* forest practices, they actually mean *money-driven.* To cut the branch one is sitting on is not particulary econmical...The whole notion of privatisation is based on assumption: of it is not the State, then it is not public. By narrowing the notion economy to business etc. one turns it into a public affair and excludes the public: public responsibility becomes commercial confidentiality.
If the economy is a a public function, then all members of the public are part of it, not as customers, but as citizens of the economy. Not as producers or traders, not as owners, managers and workers, but as citizens.
And if the economy is housekeeping from the Greek: *oikos*=house, *nomos*=law, then all aspects of the 'house' need to be looked after: ie. the living environment.
At a recent seminar on 'triple bottom line' accounting, i.e. taking into account environmental and social concerns. What is not environmentally and socially sustainable either. Good house keeping includes looking well after the house and its inhabitants...Unsustainable logging may be good for making money, but not for economy.
When the offical Forest Management Policy stipulate that all the values of the forest need to be addressed and balanced, then these values are not only things like beauty, peace, health, science, education, but also economic ones: bio-diversity, water, wildlife, ie. The ecosystem, as well as hospitality, tourism, bee-keeping, firewood and timber. Forest economy means working *with* the forest in such a way that it provides in some of the human needs whilst renewing its life as forest. The Wombat Forest before 'industrializating the pursuit of its timber values, i.e. before 1975', must have been a monumnet to economic forest-management. Through selective logging and careful felling, the forest provided timber and work to six sawmills around Trentham alone, whilst retaining its intergrity to such an extent, that areas logged in the seventies could be mistaken in the late nineties as old forest, as untouched since the gold rush. Value on a few saw mills has gone hand in hand with value stripping in the forest as a whole. Leaving strips of trees along tourist roads is like Petomkin cheating the Czar through a town of only facades....
As long as the public accepts the notion that defines economy as 'money-making', even the most elaborate consultation process wont work. Only if we insist on econmy as public housekeeping and claim ownership of the decision making process as its citizens and constituency, can there be any hope of a breakthrough. The two sides of the globalization debate blame each other for not being elected: business leaders are not elected. Politicians are elected as politicians, not as economers. There is not yet a form of economic governance that is representative of us as its constituency, locally, regionally, worldwide...
Politicians have to provide this governance by default, some of them are good at it, others obviously not. The econmy is linked to nature and the earth in ways that the nation-state is not. The link is always through local communities worldwide....That is why it is so important to take economy serious in our own backyard, instead leaving the economy to them and claim the so-called 'other values' for ourselves. We need to reclaim economy in the full sense of the word, and insist that neglecting , damaging or destroying the house of nature for money or jobs is not good housekeeping.

Wombat Forest Society Newsletter

September 2001

Wombat Forest Camp
November 23-25, 2001

Our next Wombat Forest Society Camp will be held at Nolans Crossings Picnic Area (see map below) on November23-25, 2001. Our last WFS CampOut, held in January, had 80 people participate. Once again, the WFS camp will focus on community participation in our local forest environment with some education based activities including children activities. The Nolans Creek Picnic Area is located on the Lerderderg River with barbeques and picnic tables and a short interpretative trial illustrating the sites past sawmilling history. The Wombat Forest Society has decided to provide a family friendly area within the campsite and is looking for any assistance with site management, medical officers and toliet construction. If anyone has any ideas regarding possible camp activities, please conatct Peter O'Mara on 5348-1154.

EASTERN YELLOW ROBIN

GENERAL: Small, friendly, greyish bird with yellow breast. Southern form has a yellow rump.
Sexes alike; immature, spotted brown.
VOICE: Continuous piping, also loud “Chop, Chop.”
FLIGHT: Short, slow and undulating.
FOOD: Insects from vegetation and the ground.
\NEST: Cup-shaped; of bark, grass and cobwebs, often covered with moss or lichen; lined with dry leaves; on a horizontal branch, often near water.
2-3 apple-green eggs, spotted brown. Aug-Dec.
BEHAVIOUR: Singly or in pairs. Perches sideways on tree trunks and posts when foraging. Very friendly, socialable and inquisitive.
DISTRIBUTION: Mod. Common. Southern form -Vic and N.S.W. gullies and foothills.

COMPUTER WANTEDCOMPUTER WANTED**COMPUTER WANTED**

The Wombat Forest Society desperately needs a new computer for our new office. Our old 'warhorse' is seriously ill & beyond upgrade. So if anyone has a computer, terminal or printer which they would like to donate or sell at a low cost to the WFS office, it would be much appreciated. Thanks in Anticipation!!

Birdsnotseeninthe
WombatForestfort
wentyyears:olivew
histlercrescenthon
eyeaterwhitewinge
dtrillerrufousfantail
&greybutcherbird..

WOMBAT GROMMITS PAGE

Hello & Welcome to the first Wombat Grommits Page.
My name is Erinn Taylor and in each newsletter you'll find the 'Grommit Page' stacked with cool info & ideas to help our enviro. If you want to 'have a say', share your pics & poems. SEND THEM TO
GROMMITS PAGE, P.O. BOX 428, DAYLESFORD

READ ON

WHO AM I?

I’m muscular & furry
My home is a burrow
I have no tail
And green grass I swallow

My nose is big
And important at night
I use it more
Than my hearing & sight

I may look slow
But be aware
Give me a race
And I’ll beat you

THERE.....

AMAZING BUT TRUE

* Dung beetles live on animal waste. One dung beetle can eat equal to its own weight in 12-24 hours.

* The peregine falcon can fly at speeds of up to 300 kilometres per hour when swooping on prey.

Wombat Forest Society

AGM

Tuesday, 16th October, 2001
7.30pm
Daylesford Neighbourhood House
Camp Street, Daylesford

*

Guest Speaker
David Holmgren
Permaculturist

*

Drinks/Light Refreshment

Newsletter Details

Cover Image
LinoCut *Powerful Owl* - Rob Mancini

Editor/LayOut
Peter O'Mara

Contributors
Tim Anderson, Faye Backstrom, Henk Bak, Loris Duclos,
John Endacott, Peter O'Mara, Erinn Taylor

Acknowledgements
Field Guide to the Birds of Australia - Simpson & Day
Trees Of Victoria And Adjoining Lands - Leon Costermans

If Undeliverable, return to
Wombat Forest Society
P.O. Box 428, Daylesford, 3460

****
********** **BLACKWOOD DISTRICT ACCOMMODATION** **********
********** One Bedroom Cabin, just off the Blackwood/Trentham Road *********
********** See for yourself the wonderful Wombat Forest & enjoy **********
********** the many eco-toursim opportunites available **********
********** REASONABLE RATES **********
********** phone Pat Liffman....5368-6678 **********
****

hePBurN sPRinGs aCTion grOUp

pO bOx 38 hePBurN sPRinGs

12th October, 2001

Cr Max O'Shea
Hepburn Shire

Dear Max,

A short thank-you for your hardworking efforts to secure the $928,000 funding for the Daylesford-Hepburn Springs bicycle/walking path. I believe that this project will prove to be a significant community facility and already I have recieved many such positive affirmations from our local Hepburn Springs community members. Also, the timeframe is most opportune with the Hepburn/Hepburn Springs Urban Design Framework to be soon finalised. Many people have indicated wanting to participate in any consultative process with the Hepburn Shire and VicRoads. The Hepburn Springs Action Group would be willing to provide any assistance & I personally offer my skills as a meeting convenor if required.

Anyway, once again, a huge congratulations to the staff and councillors of the Hepburn Shire on this 'almost unbelievable' funding success.

A wonderful effort!!!

Your Sincerely,

Convenor
Hepburn Springs Action Group
ph: 5348-1154

p.s. Could you please pass on our thank-you to Greg Anders for his initial support for the bicycle/walking path project.

Cc. Victor Szwed CEO Hepburn Shire
Geoff Howard MLA Ballarat East

HEpbUrn SpRIngS aCTion GROup
po box 38, hepburn springs, 3461

PRESS RELEASE
30th October, 2001

Hepburn Springs Action Group
Annual General Meeting 2001
Peter O'Mara (Convenor) 5348-1154

The Hepburn Springs Action Group will hold its Annual General Meeting on Monday November 12th, 2001 at the Savoia Hotel, Hepburn Springs.

"The Hepburn Springs Action Group continue to provide a much needed community advocacy role for local residents. Our ongoing campaign for responsible and inclusive local governance has facilitated a positive and co-operative relationship between the local community , Hepburn Shire and the State Government," says Peter O'Mara.

Over the last year, the Hepburn Springs Action Group has fulfilled many of their initial campaign objectives. Most notably, after years of political stalemates, the future of the Hepburn Pool has now been secured with both DNRE and the Hepburn Shire agreeing to the community position of the pool remaining in its current form, in accordance to the recent listing by Heritage Victoria. Next year, HSAG will be campaigning for a Heritage Management Plan for the Hepburn Pool to ensure ongoing maintenance requirements.

Also, the Hepburn Springs Action Group has played an active role in successful funding applications for the Hepburn Springs/Daylesford Bike Path, the Hepburn/Hepburn Springs Urban Design Framework and the artistic sculptural entrance to the Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve.

"All these community grants are a huge bonus to our initial resolve to protect the Hepburn Pool. Additionally, the Hepburn Springs Action Group has provided an interactive and well organised community forum for Community Fireguard, local police issues, the contentious Telstra Tower and many other issues. Our AGM will provide a platform for future local community issues," says Peter O'Mara.

The Hepburn Springs Action Group Annual General Meeting will begin at 7.30pm.

All meetings are alcohol and smoke free.

Over the next year Wombat Forest Society will be focussing their energies on water issues. The decision to focus the WFS campaign on water comes after years of dissatisfaction with how NRE forest managers have managed this resource. Communities around the Wombat raise concerns about how waterways are managed in almost every contentious coupe in the forest. NRE have shown a propensity to minimise water protection measures by redefining prescriptions or selectively using contemporary science to favour industrial logging.

Wombat Forest Society actions

Request NRE adhere to suitable size limits on shelterwood 2 coupes to protect water yield. The current delineation by NRE between Shelterwood 1 & 2 coupes appears nowhere in local management plans and prescription nor in the Code of Forest Practices. The removal of the remaining overwood trees in a Shelterwood 2 harvest creates a situation similar to clearfell logging where by there is no protection from excessive evapotranspiration rates and regrowth using substantially more water.

Request NRE provides logging history maps for all water supply catchments. Forest managers are now saying that current log volumes will not be able to be provided in the near future without compromising important water values.

Request NRE provide a clear definition as to exactly what is a waterway especially those in higher catchments. The current definitions used appears to be in conflict with the Water Act. This definition is also stalling debate in the farm dams issue.

Request NRE adopt up to date findings from the Cooperative Research Centre for Catchment Hydrology in relation to soil erosion and sediment yields. Currently NRE only takes account of soil erodibility not the potential for sediment yields leaving a site following disturbance.

Encourage government to provide resources to investigate and map the actual location of recharge areas for all mineral springs.

Re-nominate the Mineral Springs and their recharge areas for listing on the Register of the National Estate. Wombat Forest Society's earlier application for the Mineral Springs listing was stalled because of the RFAs and because NRE would not support the application.

Encourage government to ensure that tree growers are provided with incentives to plant trees where they are most needed in the landscape (ie; saline recharge areas) rather than the current situation where fresh water production areas are targeted.

Encourage government to adopt equitable water pricing reform that ensures that tree growers pay for the water used by their crop. Legislation in South Australia is currently being considered that will make all new plantations subject to the purchase of water rights.

Wombat Forest Society CampOut 2002

NOLANS CROSSING

January 18-21, 2002

Yes, the Wombat Forest Society will be holding another CampOut at Nolans Crossing Picnic Area, January 18-21, 2002. The CampOut 2002 will be an opportunity for all community members to participate in the wonderful Wombat Forest. The CampOut will have a strong family focus with a designated Family Camping Area, face painting, recreation equipment & bushwalking. The Lerderderg River & Nolans Creek, which meet at the site, are both running well & together with the old abandoned sawdust heap, activity area & barbeque facilities provides a wonderful whole community experience. The CampOut will be well supervised with designated Medical Officer, Camp Co-ordinators and Fire Plan. All neccesary fire restrictions will be adhered to. Alcohol is okay but with responsible approach. Alcohol will not be consumed in the Family Camping Area after 10pm.

DIRECTIONS

The Nolans Creek Picnic Area is situated on Lerderderg Rd, at the juction of Nolans Creek & Lerdederg River. Lerderderg Road can be reached by turning up South Bullarto Road (opposite Bullarto Store) and follow bitumen, until road becomes gravel (Camp Road) & drive 2km further & turn into Lerderderg Road on your left. Travelling along Lerderderg Road (4km) you will find this beautiful area on your left. The route will be well marked. Also Lerderderg Road can be accessed from Simmons Reef (nr Blackwood), where you turn off (right) just before you would reach Garden of St Erth.

Wombat Forest Society
po box 428 daylesford 3460

PRESS RELEASE

22nd February 2002

WOMBAT FOREST LOGGING CLOSURE

The Wombat Forest Society applaud the Bracks Government on the recently announced 79% reductions in logging volumes and subsequent move toward the phase out of logging in the Wombat Forest in accordance with ecologically sustainable forest management principles. These substaintal reductions in the Wombat Forest and other Forest Management Areas are the most significant win for Victorian forests for twenty years. The Bracks Government have also announced a major restructure of the Department and Natural Resources and Environment. The Wombat Forest Society believe that restructure is vital in achieving future balance.

The new logging volumes, based on the independent assessment of respected forester, Dr Jerry Van Clay, Southern CrossUniversity, Lismore, have vindicated the Wombat Forest Society's own analysis of sustainable yield modelling, showing the disturbing gravity of unsustainable logging in most Forest Management Areas in Victoria,.These Forest Management Areas include North East, East Gippsland, Central Gippsland, Portland, Dandenong and Mid-Murray which have combined reduction in sawlog volumes of 215 561m3 and some decrease in woodchip volumes. Obviously, this doesnt resolve the problems of woodchipping in these areas, but it can be looked upon as important moment to the fall of the greedy woodchipping industry.

The current sawlog yields in the Wombat Forest have now plummented from 72 000m3 in 1996 to now 8 600 m3 in 2002, a reduction of one eighth, once again supporting the Wombat Forest Society's long held campaign on unsustainable logging. A significant reduction in woodchipping has also occured during this time in the Wombat Forest with any decrease in the sawlog yield. The Bracks Government's non-renewal and proposed buy-out of current logging licenses will provide to an end of commercial logging in the Wombat Forest sooner, rather than later. The Bracks Government will still have to deal with communities with proposed logging coupes in their backyards and the next logging season will provide much difficulty.

The Wombat Forest Society will continue to support local concerns as been seen by the recent withdrawl of the Dry Diggings logging coupe, near Daylesford. The NRE withdrawl of logging from six water catchments within the Wombat Forest, decreasing the harvestable area by one third, has also placed increase pressure on logging operations. The Wombat Forest Society will continue to campaign strongly for better outcomes in relation to water values. The Wombat Forest Society has always held a non-negiotable position on ecological sustainability and equal opportunity for all forest stakeholders.

The Bracks Government's brave political decision in the Wombat Forest, based on open and intelligent process, shows the previous Kennett Liberal Government's contempt for the Wombat Forest Society and community concerns of overlogging in the Wombat Forest to be highly negligent.

In 1998, the Wombat Forest Society and the local timber industry co-signed a groundbreaking letter to the Kennett Government, detailing our shared concerns regarding overlogging in the Wombat Forest, The Liberal Government Conservation Minister, Marie Tehan, continually ignored this statement despite constant lobbying, indicating an arrogant contempt for us all.

Finally, after the threat of direct action, the minister, Mrs Tehan, responded with an A4 paper, dismissing all shared concerns. Obviously, both the Kennett Government and NRE advisors chose to ignore these unique concerns and continued on the statewide bludgeoning of our our local forests.

More alarmingly, senior NRE management continued to misrepresent and ignore our stated, intellectual and persistent concerns for the next five years to all government.. The Wombat Forest Society now hold these senior NRE staff with much disappointment and bewilderment, believing that they should be now held partly accountable the considerable loss and difficulties that our local community must now endure.

Further to this complacency and neglect, the destructive woodchipping practices of Midways and demand for big logs from our largest sawmiller have contributed to the destruction of many non-timber values within the Wombat Forest and the unfortunate demise of the local timber industry. These greedy and unfetted actions have lead to the second closure of the Wombat Forest Society in 100 years, the earlier leading to a Royal Commission in 1898 and subsequent establishment of the Forest Commissions Victoria (created in 1919), to investigate the demise of the 'ruined forest'.

The Wombat Forest Society is now calling on all levels of Government and our local community to find meaningful employment and support for our displaced workers and families. The timber industry workers and smaller sawmills have supported the Wombat Forest Society fight for sustainable management and intergenerational equity and, themselves, are the victims of irresponsible and exclusive process.

The Wombat Forest Society acknowledge and respect our local workers, having always provided local industry and the forestry union shared position at all public meetings. These local workers have shown an honesty and intergrity toward these local forest issues and the Wombat Forest Society approach and we feel deeply saddened for their employment loss. The Wombat Forest Society have always believed that the overlogging of our local forests is a whole community responsiblity. The future management of the Wombat Forest should now be back to the community, providing a restoration phase of this wonderful forest.

Finally, the Wombat Forest Society would like to acknowledge the tenancious and hardworking efforts of Joanne Duncan, Gisborne MLA, who has constantly supported our campaign to both Minister and Government despite the many difficulties that the forest debate contains. A wonderful effort.

Yes, Our Forests, Our Future.

CONTACTS

Tim Anderson	Peter O'Mara	Loris Duclos
5348-3998	5348-1154	5348-3998
0407 481 740		0418 433 468

Wombat Forest Society
po box 428 daylesford 3460

PRESS RELEASE

25th February

WOODCHIPPING MUST GO

The Wombat Forest Society are calling for the immediate scrutiny of woodchipping operations in the Wombat Forest.

While acknowledging the Bracks Government's recent announcement of a 79% reduction in sawlog volumes , the Wombat Forest Society believe this to be benign if a similar reduction doesnt occur for residual logs taken from the forest. Unlike many FMA's, the woodchipping volumes have plummetted in the last five years. This decline in woodchipping must continue if we are to have any capacity to move toward a successful restoration phase.

Woodchip exporter Midways must now have no future in the Wombat Forest.

The Wombat Forest Society successfully had the Midways woodchipping licence revoked in 1996, only to be overturned by the incoming Howard Government.

We didnt like it then and we dont like it now. Out!

The Wombat Forest Society will be arguing with the Bracks Government that the momentum has arrived to make the Wombat Forest, WOODCHIP FREE again.

All residual log volumes should now be monitored to ensure any blow out in woodchipping. Even then, woodchip targetted logs should be offered to smaller mills and future firewood supply. Local NRE staff must now be empowered to impound logs for better local usage.

The woodchipping industry has long hidden behind the system of woodchipping as by-product of sawlog harvesting. Given the Bracks Government review exposing the failure of the Shelterwood logging system (2 stage clearfell) in the Wombat Forest, then this harvesting application must be under serious doubt.

The Wombat Forest Society will vigorously any woodchipping increase.

The bubble has burst & now for the BANG.

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Wombat Forest Society
po box 428 daylesford 3460

PRESS RELEASE

23rd February, 2002

EXPORT WOODCHIPPING MUST GO

The Wombat Forest Society are calling for the immediate confirmation that reductions in woodchipping operations will fall in line with the recently announced sawlog reductions in the Wombat Forest.

While acknowledging the Bracks Government's recent announcement of a 79% reduction in sawlog volumes, the Wombat Forest Society believe this to be benign if a corresponding reduction does not occur for residual logs taken from the Wombat Forest.

Unlike many FMA's, the woodchip volumes have plummetted in the Wombat Forest for the last five years in line with the decrease in sawlogs brought about from previous forest process. This decline in woodchipping must continue if we are to have any capacity to move toward a successful restoration phase.

Woodchip exporter Midways has NO future in the Wombat Forest.

The Wombat Forest Society successfully had the Midways export woodchip licence revoked in 1996, only to be overturned by the incoming Howard Government.

The Wombat Forest Society will be putting the case to the Bracks Government that the momentum has arrived to make the Wombat Forest, EXPORT WOODCHIP FREE again.

All residual log volumes should now be monitored, low grade logs should be offered to smaller mills and future firewood supply. The woodchipping industry has squandered local forest resource by sending usuable logs to be woodchipped. Local industry must now be empowered to use these logs for better local usage.

Given the Bracks Government review exposing the failure of sustainable logging operations in the Wombat Forest, a new approach to low grade logs is vital.

The Wombat Forest Society will vigorously campaign against any woodchipping increase in the Wombat Forest.

The bubble has burst & now for the BANG.

CONTACTS

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5348-3998	5348-1154	5348-3998
0407 481 740		0418 433 468

Wombat Forest Society
po box 428 daylesford 3460

25th February 2002

To: Spa Chamber Of Commerce
Rotary Club (Daylesford)
Lions Club (Daylesford)
Hepburn Shire
Macedon Ranges & Spa Country Toursim

Hello Everyone,

The Wombat Forest Society is now calling on all levels of Government and our local business communities to find meaningful employment and support for our displaced workers and families due to the recent reductions in logging and phase out of local timber industry. These reductions will have severe implications on local employment and the Wombat Forest Society believe that a local TaskForce should be established to ensure maximum re-employment.

The local timber industry workers and smaller sawmills have always supported the Wombat Forest Society fight for sustainable management and intergenerational equity and, themselves, are the victims of irresponsible and exclusive process by both senior NRE management and previous Government. Unfortunately, it is now these men and women who must now endure the full impact of this closure. The Wombat Forest Society has pushed for, during the West Victoria RFA Agreement, and the recent reductions for adequate compensation for these workers. Although, the compensation package are generous, it still does not adequately cover the human element of losing your place within a community.

The Wombat Forest Society acknowledge and respect our local workers, having always provided local industry and the forestry union shared position at all public meetings. These local workers have shown an honesty and intergrity toward these local forest issues and the Wombat Forest Society approach and we feel deeply saddened for their employment loss. The Wombat Forest Society have always believed that the overlogging of our local forests is a whole community responsiblity. The future management of the Wombat Forest should now be back to the community, providing a restoration phase of this wonderful forest.

The Wombat Forest Society is now writing to you all to come together and develop a whole community approach to helping these workers through a difficult transistion.

Beyond your reply, we envisage the establishment of local Hepburn Shire Community TaskForce. We hope that you will want involvement.

Please contact for further detail.

Regards,
Peter O'Mara
Vice President
Wombat Forest Society
ph: 5348-1154

Wombat Forest Society
po box 428 daylesford 3460

PRESS RELEASE

25th February

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Why the Victorian License Review result

IS A BIG WIN.....
LOGGING REDUCTION OVERVIEW

Having read the e-mails and heard the public comments from the 'its never enough brigade', I am responding to actually explain the process Wombat Forest Society participated in and the significance of the outcome.

Background

The State Government was required to undertake a License Review scheduled under the Forest Act last year. This year it was also required to undertake the 5-yearly sustainable yield review in each Forest Management Area in the State.

The committee for the License Review was the Victorian Association of Forest Industries (Graeme Gooding and Michael O'Connor from the Union). The agenda was to get through this and grant new 15-year licenses, probably to their chosen few.

The spanner in the works was that we (Wombat Forest Society) had been lobbying like mad and occasionally madly lobbying the State ALP in opposition and into government with our modeling and auditing of not just the Midlands but each FMA in the State, (as presented at the National Forest Summit in Hepburn Springs last year). The argument being 'how can you issue new long-term licenses when there are serious questions surrounding logging levels and sustainability and an obvious failure by the State Agency -Natural Resources and Environment in its ability to conform to the new post-RFA 'Ecological Sustainable Forest Management' Principles.

The State Minister Sherryl Garbutt then engaged Prof. Jerry Vanclay from Southern Cross University in Lismore NSW to undertake an 'independent sustainable yield review' for each FMA. His results are now out there for all to see.

The review process was never about reserves or changes to 'Land Use Determinations'.

Outcome

The results have been so dramatic that on Thursday morning we had the unique spectacle of the head of VAFI on the radio and news saying that NRE has no credibility and had failed badly. We had Michael O'Connor sayingthat NRE was corrupt, we had Big Bob Humphries (sawmiller East Gippsland) saying the same.

In the Wombat later that morning we had the Premier Steve Bracks and the Minster saying to the media that NRE had failed and would be pulled apart and rebuilt. We had the Premier announce a phase out of logging in the Midlands FMA (includes Wombat). We had the Minister for Conservation Sherryl Garbutt also announce a phase out of logging and woodchipping in the Wombat, and management of the forests in this area by the community. There will be no renewal of existing licenses in the Wombat Forest and a proposed mid-license buyback thus ending commercial logging in the Wombat Forest.

The biggest hindrance to gaining proper environmental management, planning and outcomes has been the agency that has controlled our public forests, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. This 'crony club', as all well know, have been dismissing the legitimate concerns of the forest movement for decades, with their superior 'foresters know best' and 'it's too complex for you the public to be able to understand' attitude.

WELL FOLKS, this attitude from NRE foresters, now has no currency, the Premier, Minister, Industry, Union and more (including WFS) have all stated it. How many areas, non-timber values and related issues are now open to question based on the fact that NRE, in not having sustainability and more importantly, an auditing system underpinning their planning system, have made decisions that can now be argued to have been deficient.

NRE is to be split into at least two separate entities, answerable to at least two Ministers. This is recognition and application of recommendations from the ACF's Marsden Jacobs Report into conformity to National Competition Policy. Well done ACF.

The implications are now quite enormous. In response to Susie's call for the impacts of this on the RFA Bill, this does have serious implications on the RFAs and I am happy to discuss how if I anyone wants to contact me (space here does not allow it). On a State level there are many new opportunities.

The WFS have been feeding our work on sustainability (or lack of) to a very well known and respected forest activist who is working with Japanese institutions and agencies to show that woodchips from Australia are from unsustainable and destructive practices. We are in fact having a tour in the Wombat Forest soon with a delegation from Japan, for them to see the forest and what is happening and to hear of our modeling. So this outcome may well contribute to end the export bloody woodchipping.

The outcome has proven that long-term licenses are a hindrance towards ensuring sustainability and are to be abolished. There will only be 1-2 year, 5-year and 10-year licenses in Victorian forests. These will carry new requirements and obligations.

In the case of the Wombat/Midlands, the government has sort legal advice about the existing log licenses in the area. Opinions from a number of sources are that the licenses are apparently legally binding,. The Government is therefore in a position that it has 7 remaining licenses that run out from now until 2009. Luckily it is the bigger licenses that run out the soonest. By 2006/7 the total of the remaining licenses, I believe, will be a few '000m3. Three existing licenses in the Wombat Forest will cut be in July 2002.

In order to accelerate the phase out the Government is offering the most compensation NOW and the longer a sawmiller waits the less they get, down to nothing if they let their licenses run out. We believe that the decline may be swift. This methodology applies Statewide.

I see this as being a significant incremental win. The WFS campaign has seen the industry's sawlog quota drop from 72 000m3 pa 5 years ago drop through 58 000m3 to 40 000m3 through the RFA down now to 8 600m3, with a commitment for a phase out, including woodchipping. In 1995/96 we were able to get the Keating Government to stop the export woodchip license for Midlands, the election of the Howard Government 3 months later saw it immediately reinstated. 5 years ago around 120 000tons of woodchips came out of the Midlands, last year it was around half of that.

This shows that there is (in some circumstances) a direct relationship between sawlog levels and woodchip levels. By attacking sawlog levels we have halved and now are ending woodchipping.

We have had some significant areas put into reserves by playing in process and I am happy to take anyone out to these areas.

The WFS has already formed a timber worker support network and are contacting a number of employers in the area looking for support to take on displaced workers. So far we have found a number of employers willing to take them on. We strongly believe in social responsibility.

Our campaign is not over, nor even slowed down. We are still arguing over what can and can't be cut. NRE recently announced that as a result of a 4 year WFS campaign over logging levels within specific water catchments which led to greater RFA & Management Plans

restrictions, 11 000hectares of the 27 000 hectares of the Wombat are now off-line to logging. WFS have forced NRE to actually apply its own catchment protection prescriptions. Also, we have undertaken a most extensive analysis of the most recent Wood Utilisation Plan and already had coupes withdrawn because of overriding non-timber values.

The real job at hand though is the restoration of the Wombat for the future. We have made it imperative that the Government needs to maintain funding for this work to be done and we see the potential of displaced loggers being re-employed in this work.

I am not saying that the whole package is good and certainly there needs to be further explanation, but it is better than we had a week ago.

My Whinge

It is shame that those within Victoria, that choose the option of opting out of every process, with a catch-cry of 'I/we just want to save forests', then take the opportunity to slag off outcomes from those that do participate.

My call to Jill and Liz, Scott, Alan and co. is simple, if you don't like the outcome, be consistent and also publicly state that you also reject the announced reductions in your areas. Also state that you were happy with the old NRE and that you must not want it split into two, answerable to two ministers. State publicly that you reject the application of the non-formal reserve system along streams that amounts to I believe the loss of around ½
million hectares to the timber industry. State that the figures are unreliable and give the industry the ability to argue against the reductions.

Maybe the next time a government is faced with options over forests, they will consider that 'there is no satisfying the conservationists' so why have two pissed-off parties (loggers and greenies) by giving conservation outcomes. They may decide that at least if they favor the timber industry they will keep them quite, the conservationists always whine anyway.

The Brack's Government has taken a hard road. They got in on regional Victorian votes and support from regionally based Independents. We saw the Kennett Government allow massive rorting in our forests. We saw the previous government set up Freight Australia to re-open the rail lines to Bairnsdale and Portland for woodchips and allow woodchip trains from the North-East of the State. This is why the woodchipping has gone through the roof. I have the press clippings from the business section of The Age a few years ago announcing and the intentions. This accounts for the 60% rise in woodchip volumes in the State.

It was appalling to witness the aggressive grandstanding by Scott Kinnear (Vic. Senate Greens candidate) and Alan Gray and co. at the announcement of the review by Bracks and Garbutt on Thursday. This throng turned up and rode over the whole event demanding that their 'transition plan' be adopted.

During their media grandstanding we had Scott and Alan tell the media that WFS was 'nothing more than ALP hacks that have done nothing for the environment'. This went to air on the news. If this is the sort of crap that these people think is acceptable then no worries, we are more than willing to play this sort of game.

The loss from the above actions was a shift in focus on the evening news of Bracks and Garbutt bagging the hell out of NRE as they did and announcing the phase out of logging and woodchipping which was stated by Garbutt.

What adds to my disgust is that the 'transition plan' that was so important to be heard allows for, to quote a proponent of it in our local paper 2 weeks ago "Given that the Wombat Forest has been unsustainably logged for the past 150-years, Given that unsustainable, destructive logging has been going on for the past 150 years, a further decade or two of unsustainable logging seems a reasonable compromise."

Well sorry, WFS has a firm position on sustainability- NO COMPROMISE!

I may be from another planet, but isn't a commitment to phase out logging in 7 years better than letting the industry log unsustainably for 10 to 20 years? The plan also states that during the transition an implementation committee for each FMA be set up with one Wilderness Society representative and one industry representative. The other issue is the availability of a plantation resource that current Victorian native forest sawmillers could convert to. The previous government sold them off. The private plantation resource that does exist is already sold.

Given that this plan is for the whole of Victoria, WAS THIS PLAN THAT COVERS THE WHOLE STATE EVER PUT TO STATEWIDE GROUPS? What kind of fascism are we facing when it is decided that there will be a TWS representative for each area?

Yes, we were invited to the announcement. Why? Because I asked to be and because we had lobbied long and hard over sustainability. I had asked to be there on the basis that I am like many and are "at a bitter and twisted phase" of my attitude to NRE and successive failures of government. I asked to be there so if the press wanted proof of the bullshit that NRE have given the forest campaigners and the community for years we would provide it. And what, we were Liberal Party hacks when we got Tuckey to order a sustainability review during the RFAs and what WA Green hacks because we did work for Chrissy Sharp last year on the implementation of ESFM in WA?

This is called effectively engaging in the democratic process.

I do applaud the Brack's Government for taking the tough decision, a decision that was made for the future and could well cost them government. I have also called on them to review clearfelling and woodchipping.

It is perhaps ironic that a group that only argued sustainability has achieved the end of logging and woodchipping in our area. In regards to issues raised above, I believe that the movement is dysfunctional while we have this renegade end to it. I see neither need nor advantage in maintaining a public silence over their actions. If it is a free for all as displayed the other day 'then so be it?' It is my belief that we would be much better served to respect a diverse approach and to occasionally take the wins.

It is my intention to raise these issues at the Victorian Summit and the National Summit (if I can get the bucks together to attend).

Tim Anderson.

Thanks to all those that have sent private and public e-mails of congrats and support, phone calls etc.

Sorry about the length folks.

>X-eGroups-Return:
>sentto-2256940-723-1014716866-tanderson=giant.net.au@returns.groups.yahoo.com
>X-Sender: spathy@westconnect.com.au
>X-Apparently-To: vicforests@yahoogroups.com
>To: "Vic Forests" <vicforests@yahoogroups.com>
>X-Mailer: Microsoft Outlook Express 5.00.2919.6700
>From: "Suresh Pathy" <spathy@westconnect.com.au>
>Mailing-List: list vicforests@yahoogroups.com; contact
>vicforests-owner@yahoogroups.com
>Delivered-To: mailing list vicforests@yahoogroups.com
>List-Unsubscribe: <mailto:vicforests-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com>
>Date: Tue, 26 Feb 2002 20:39:04 +1100
>Subject: [vicforests] Vandals of the Century
>Reply-To: vicforests@yahoogroups.com
>
>Media release Tuesday 26th of Feb
>Vandals of the century
>
>We are only two years into the new century and the Department of Natural
>Resources and Environment (DNRE) has set a record for mindless vandalism
>that will be difficult to surpass this century.
>
>The Great Dividing Trail is a 235-km walking track from Bendigo to Bacchus
>Marsh, with another leg from Ballarat to Daylesford. This trail is one of
>the prime assets for this region. It allows and encourages both local people
>and visitors to the region to experience the beauty and magic of the forests
>of this region.
>
>DNRE has responded to this wonder by vandalising it. DNRE has already
>clearfelled and burnt one third of the trail with a further third currently
>being logged. The final third of the trail is due to be destroyed by DNRE
>next year.
>
>Local resident and spokesman for the Blackwood Forest Protection Group, Mr
>Nick Debuc-Timson said, "I went up to have a look at the trail and I could
>not believe what had happened to it. The trail is gone, DNRE has pulled up
>the great signs that marked it before. When they have finished vandalising
>the trail, it won't be worth walking. They are wrecking the best forest in
>this area. We were looking forward to the track opening bringing many more
>visitors to our town. This is the sort of support that tourist and
>accommodation businesses in our town need to survive."
>
>Dr Suresh Pathy, Convenor of liberals for forests, said, "This has got to be
>one of the biggest acts of bastardry in Victorian history. What makes it
>worse is that the local MP, Geoff Howard, is not only Parliamentary
>Secretary of DNRE but he is in charge of the Tracks and Trails Committee. He
>not only should have known what was going on in his electorate but he has
>the ability to ensure that the trail is protected, that is his job. He gets
>a fat bonus for this yet he has done nothing; he is a lazy politician who
>did not do his job. Mr Bracks should sack him. Last week Mr Bracks said that
>DNRE was incompetent and has completely messed up this forest, no wonder
>with Geoff Howard in control."
>
>DNRE breached agreements with the Great Dividing Trail Association with
>logging the track. There is distress within the GDTA at the destruction of
>their efforts. Local, State and Federal governments had supported the
>construction of the trail with financial donations of over $300,000 in
>support of thousands of hours of volunteer labour and effort.
>
>Dr Pathy said, "Mr Bracks' statement last week only made this situation
>worse. He has given permission for the woodchip industry to get as much of
>the forests as they want, all he did was kill value-adding to timber from
>our forests. Have a look at his statement, he did not mention acreage of
>forests logged or woodchips, only logs going to timber mills. These mills
>have not been the cause of forest destruction, it has always been woodchips
>and Mr Bracks has encouraged this industry. DNRE released logging plans
>three weeks ago, they are current under the new logging regime. They reveal
>no change for logging within the Wombat, 9% will be clearfelled, poisoned
>and burnt this year and a further 9% next year. After that there won't be
>any forest left to log. This shows last weeks exercise to be an exercise in
>spin with the help of a tame bunch of ALP supporters claiming to be
>environmentalists. The term for this is "Greenwash", where a pro-environment

>veneer is painted over decisions that are bad for communities and the
>environment. Local communities and environment groups have been outraged by
>the Bracks plan: it makes a bad situation even worse."

Date: Sun, 24 Feb 2002 17:24:47 +1100
To: petero@telstra.easymail.com.au
From: Anderson <tanderson@giant.net.au>
Subject: The Announcement Letter for WFS

Why the Victorian License Review result IS A BIG WIN

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The committee for the License Review was the Victorian Association of Forest Industries (Graeme Gooding and Michael O'Connor from the Union). The agenda was to get through this and grant new 15-year licenses, probably to their chosen few.

The spanner in the works was that we (Wombat Forest Society) had been lobbying like mad and occasionally madly lobbying the State ALP in opposition and into government with our modeling and auditing of not just the Midlands but each FMA in the State, (as presented at the National Forest Summit in Hepburn Springs last year). The argument being 'how can you issue new long-term licenses when there are serious questions surrounding logging levels and sustainability and an obvious failure by the State Agency -Natural Resources and Environment in its ability to conform to the new post-RFA 'Ecological Sustainable Forest Management' Principles.

The State Minister Sherryl Garbutt then engaged Prof. Jerry Vanclay from Southern Cross University in Lismore NSW to undertake an 'independent sustainable yield review' for each FMA. His results are now out there for all to see.

The review process was never about reserves or changes to 'Land Use Determinations'.

Outcome

The results have been so dramatic that on Thursday morning we had the unique spectacle of the head of VAFI on the radio and news saying that NRE has no credibility and had failed badly. We had Michael O'Connor saying that NRE was corrupt, we had Big Bob Humphries (sawmiller East Gippsland) saying the same.

In the Wombat later that morning we had the Premier Steve Bracks and the Minster saying to the media that NRE had failed and would be pulled apart and rebuilt. We had the Premier announce a phase out of logging in the Midlands FMA (includes Wombat). We had the Minister for Conservation Sherryl Garbutt also announce a phase out of logging and woodchipping in the Wombat, and management of the forests in this area by the community. There will be no renewal of existing licenses in the Wombat Forest and a proposed mid-license buyback thus ending commercial logging in the Wombat Forest.

The biggest hindrance to gaining proper environmental management, planning and outcomes has been the agency that has controlled our public forests, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. This 'crony club', as all well know, have been dismissing the legitimate concerns of the forest movement for decades, with their superior 'foresters know best' and 'it's too complex for you the public to be able to understand' attitude.

WELL FOLKS, this attitude from NRE foresters, now has no currency, the Premier, Minister, Industry, Union and more (including WFS) have all stated it. How many areas, non-timber values and related issues are now open to question based on the fact that NRE, in not having sustainability and more importantly, an auditing system underpinning their planning system, have made decisions that can now be argued to have been deficient.

NRE is to be split into at least two separate entities, answerable to at least two Ministers. This is recognition and application of recommendations from the ACF's Marsden Jacobs Report into conformity to National Competition Policy. Well done ACF.

The implications are now quite enormous.
In response to Susie's call for the impacts of this on the RFA Bill, this does have serious implications on the RFAs and I am happy to discuss how if I anyone wants to contact me (space here does not allow it). On a State level there are many new opportunities.

The WFS have been feeding our work on sustainability (or lack of) to a very well known and respected forest activist who is working with Japanese institutions and agencies to show that woodchips from Australia are from unsustainable and destructive practices. We are in fact having a tour in the Wombat Forest soon with a delegation from Japan, for them to see the forest and what is happening and to hear of our modeling. So this outcome may well contribute to end the export bloody woodchipping.

The outcome has proven that long-term licenses are a hindrance towards ensuring sustainability and are to be abolished. There will only be 1-2 year, 5-year and 10-year licenses in Victorian forests. These will carry new requirements and obligations.

In the case of the Wombat/Midlands, the government has sort legal advice about the existing log licenses in the area. Opinions from a number of sources are that the licenses are apparently legally binding,. The Government is therefore in a position that it has 7 remaining licenses that run out from now until 2009. Luckily it is the bigger licenses that run out the soonest. By 2006/7 the total of the remaining licenses, I believe, will be a few '000m3. Three existing licenses in the Wombat Forest will cut be in July 2002.

In order to accelerate the phase out the Government is offering the most compensation NOW and the longer a sawmiller waits the less they get, down to nothing if they let their licenses run out. We believe that the decline may be swift. This methodology applies Statewide.

I see this as being a significant incremental win. The WFS campaign has seen the industry's sawlog quota drop from 72 000m3 pa 5 years ago drop through 58 000m3 to 40 000m3 through the RFA down now to 8 600m3, with a commitment for a phase out, including woodchipping. In 1995/96 we were able to get the Keating Government to stop the export woodchip license for Midlands, the election of the Howard Government 3 months later saw it immediately reinstated. 5 years ago around 120 000tons of woodchips came out of the Midlands, last year it was around half of that.

This shows that there is (in some circumstances) a direct relationship between sawlog levels and woodchip levels. By attacking sawlog levels we have halved and now are ending woodchipping.

We have had some significant areas put into reserves by playing in process and I am happy to take anyone out to these areas.

The WFS has already formed a timber worker support network and are contacting a number of employers in the area looking for support to take on displaced workers. So far we have found a number of employers willing to take them on. We strongly believe in social responsibility.

Our campaign is not over, nor even slowed down. We are still arguing over what can and can't be cut. NRE recently announced that as a result of a 4 year WFS campaign over logging levels within specific water catchments which led to greater RFA & Management Plans restrictions, 11 000hectares of the 27 000 hectares of the Wombat are now off-line to logging. WFS have forced NRE to actually apply its own catchment protection prescriptions. Also, we have undertaken a most extensive analysis of the most recent Wood Utilisation Plan and already had coupes withdrawn because of overriding non-timber values.

The real job at hand though is the restoration of the Wombat for the

future. We have made it imperative that the Government needs to maintain funding for this work to be done and we see the potential of displaced loggers being re-employed in this work.

I am not saying that the whole package is good and certainly there needs to be further explanation, but it is better than we had a week ago.

My Whinge

It is shame that those within Victoria, that choose the option of opting out of every process, with a catch-cry of 'I/we just want to save forests', then take the opportunity to slag off outcomes from those that do participate.

My call to Jill and Liz, Scott Alan and co. is simple, if you don't like the outcome, be consistent and also publicly state that you also reject the announced reductions in your areas. Also state that you were happy with the old NRE and that you must not want it split into two, answerable to two ministers. State publicly that you reject the application of the non-formal reserve system along streams that amounts to I believe the loss of around ½ million hectares to the timber industry. State that the figures are unreliable and give the industry the ability to argue against the reductions.

Maybe the next time a government is faced with options over forests, they will consider that 'there is no satisfying the conservationists' so why have two pissed-off parties (loggers and greenies) by giving conservation outcomes. They may decide that at least if they favor the timber industry they will keep them quite, the conservationists always whine anyway.

The Brack's Government has taken a hard road. They got in on regional Victorian votes and support from regionally based Independents. We saw the Kennett Government allow massive rorting in our forests. We saw the previous government set up Freight Australia to re-open the rail lines to Bairnsdale and Portland for woodchips and allow woodchip trains from the North-East of the State. This is why the woodchipping has gone through the roof. I have the press clippings from the business section of The Age a few years ago announcing and the intentions. This accounts for the 60% rise in woodchip volumes in the State.

It was appalling to witness the aggressive grandstanding by Scott Kinnear (Vic. Senate Greens candidate) and Alan Gray and co. at the announcement of the review by Bracks and Garbutt on Thursday. This throng turned up and rode over the whole event demanding that their 'transition plan' be adopted.

During their media grandstanding we had Scott and Alan tell the media that WFS was 'nothing more than ALP hacks that have done nothing for the environment'. This went to air on the news. If this is the sort of crap that these people think is acceptable then no worries, we are more than willing to play this sort of game.

The loss from the above actions was a shift in focus on the evening news of Bracks and Garbutt bagging the hell out of NRE as they did and announcing the phase out of logging and woodchipping which was stated by Garbutt.

What adds to my disgust is that the 'transition plan' that was so important to be heard allows for, to quote a proponent of it in our local paper 2 weeks ago "Given that the Wombat Forest has been unsustainably logged for the past 150-years, Given that unsustainable, destructive logging has been going on for the past 150 years, a further decade or two of unsustainable logging seems a reasonable compromise."

Well sorry, WFS has a firm position on sustainability- NO COMPROMISE!

I may be from another planet, but isn't a commitment to phase out logging in 7 years better than letting the industry log unsustainably for 10 to 20 years? The plan also states that during the transition an implementation committee for each FMA be set up with one wilderness society representative and one industry representative. The other issue is the availability of a plantation resource that current Victorian native forest sawmillers could

convert to. The previous government sold them off. The private plantation resource that does exist is already sold.

Given that this plan is for the whole of Victoria, WAS THIS PLAN THAT COVERS THE WHOLE STATE EVER PUT TO STATEWIDE GROUPS? What kind of fascism are we facing when it is decided that there will be a TWS representative for each area?

Yes, we were invited to the announcement. Why? Because I asked to be and because we had lobbied long and hard over sustainability. I had asked to be there on the basis that I am like many and are "at a bitter and twisted phase" of my attitude to NRE and successive failures of government. I asked to be there so if the press wanted proof of the bullshit that NRE have given the forest campaigners and the community for years we would provide it. And what, we were Liberal Party hacks when we got Tuckey to order a sustainability review during the RFAs and what WA Green hacks because we did work for Chrissy Sharp last year on the implementation of ESFM in WA? This is called effectively engaging in the democratic process.

I do applaud the Brack's Government for taking the tough decision, a decision that was made for the future and could well cost them government. I have also called on them to review clearfelling and woodchipping.

It is perhaps ironic that a group that only argued sustainability has achieved the end of logging and woodchipping in our area. In regards to issues raised above, I believe that the movement is dysfunctional while we have this renegade end to it. I see neither need nor advantage in maintaining a public silence over their actions. If it is a free for all as displayed the other day 'then so be it?' It is my belief that we would be much better served to respect a diverse approach and to occasionally take the wins.

It is my intention to raise these issues at the Victorian Summit and the National Summit (if I can get the bucks together to attend).

Tim Anderson.

Thanks to all those that have sent private and public e-mails of congrats and support, phone calls etc.

Sorry about the length folks.

Landcare Workshop Series 2002

Getting the Seed –Collecting seed from native plants
Friday 8 February
Time: 9.30am – 3.00pm
Location: Victorian Landcare Centre

Christine Eales, Ballarat Region Seedbank manager, and local seed collector, Frances Cincotta, lead a hands-on session in all aspects of native seed collecting. Collect, extract, clean and store seed from indigenous plants and discuss the legal and ethical considerations involved in seed collecting. Explore opportunities and value-adding potential for seed collecting for revegetation projects and farm forestry plantations.

BYO lunch
Light refreshments and notes provided
Cost: $35 / $20 concession

Growing the Seed – Native plant propagation
Wednesday 6 March
Time: 4.30 - 7.30pm
Location: Victorian Landcare Centre

Tim D'Ombrain leads this practical session in simple propagating methods for a range of indigenous species. Learn what materials, equipment and conditions are required for easy, successful propagation. Participants take away a generous selection of plants.

Light refreshments and notes provided
Cost: $45/$30 concession

'Groundworks' Field Day
Friday 19 April
Time: 10.00am-3.00pm
Location: Ballan. Venue to be confirmed

A Field Day presenting practical sessions, demonstrations and information in all aspects of planning, preparing and carrying out revegetation projects. Eg: ground preparation techniques, equipment and machinery, soils, plant selection, pest plant and animal control, farm forestry and more.

Lunch provided by CFA for small charge.
Cost: Free entry

The Barwon – From Dreamtime to Sea Change
Sunday 21 April
Time: 10.00am – 4.00pm
Location: Winchelsea. Venue to be confirmed

Rediscover the Barwon River, from its Dreamtime origins to Sea Change. Explore its heritage, both Koori and European, as well as the forestry influences in the upper reaches of the catchment. Follow the path of escaped convict
William Buckley and his travels with the Wuthaurung people in the days before Batman.

Supported by Corangamite Catchment Management Authority.
BYO lunch
Light refreshments and notes provided.
Cost – $35/$20 concession

From Muddy Dam to Wildlife Wetland
Sun 28 April
Time: 9.30am – 1.00pm
Location: Victorian Landcare Centre

Freshwater biologist, Alison Pouliot, will discuss ways to develop and enhance the habitat and environmental values of dams and practical approaches to attract wildlife.
Gain an understanding of the relationship between land and water environments and ways of measuring the health of a dam.

Light refreshments, notes and transport provided
Cost: $35/20 concession

Contact on the Loddon Frontier 1835-50
Sunday 12 May
Time: 9.30am - 3.30pm
Location: meet at Victorian Landcare Centre

Historian and environmental educator, Barry Golding, leads a tour that teases out the history of contact between Aboriginal and post-Aboriginal settlement. Starting with 1838 heritage sites in grasslands north of Creswick it ends at the former Loddon Aboriginal Protectorate at Franklinford. Knowledge of 'pre-gold' contact is important in interpreting, reconciling and reconstructing sustainable Australian landscapes and communities in 2002.

BYO lunch
Light refreshments, notes and transport provided
Cost: $40 /$25 concession

Biodiversity Indicators - Furry, flowery, flighty and ferocious
Sunday 26 May
Time: 10am-4pm
Location: Forrest. Venue to be confirmed

Delve into the world of biodiversity. Learn about indicator plants and animals found in healthy and not-so healthy
environments, their role and impacts on ecosystem health. Discover practical and effective actions to enhance native biodiversity that can be easily implemented on small properties.

Supported by Corangamite Catchment Management Authority.
BYO lunch.
Light refreshments and notes provided
Cost: $35/$20 concession

Water and Land Use Forum
'Turning the tables on rising groundwater'
Friday 14 June
Time: 10.30am-3.30pm
Location: Lismore. Venue to be confirmed

The latest scientific research into the impact of different types of land use on surface and groundwater will be presented. Speakers will discuss the relevance of their findings for south west Victoria.

Supported by Corangamite Catchment Management Authority.
Light refreshments and notes provided
Cost: No charge

Fungi Features
Sunday 21 July
Time: 10.00am-2pm
Location: Victorian Landcare Centre

Alison Pouliot takes us into the fungi kingdom, identifying species found in a wet forest, explaining their structure and their important ecological function. Learn how to tell which ones are edible, or not, and then have fun sampling fabulous fungi cuisine with chef Fofi Christou.

Light refreshments, fungi cuisine, notes and transport provided
Cost: $35/$20 concession

Private Forestry Certification Forum
'Sourcing timber sustainably'
Monday 29 July
Time: 1.30pm-4.30pm
Location: Creswick Forestry School Seminar Centre

Certification of forestry practice is topical and contraversial. The forum will provide up-to-date information with particular relevance to small scale private growers. A panel of experts will outline various certification systems, pros and cons, and describe the current state of play.

Presented in association with Melbourne University and Ballarat AFG
Light refreshments and notes provided
Cost: no charge

Remnant Vegetation Management
North Central Catchment Management Authority will present five sessions on different aspects of remnant vegetation management. New, innovative approaches to understanding, assessing, monitoring and action planning are introduced in these interactive workshops.

All workshops:
Time: 9.30 am-1.00pm
Locations: venues and map details provided upon registration
Light refreshments & notes provided.
Cost: $35 / $20 concession per workshop or $150/$80 concession for 5 workshops

#1 Looking After What We've Got.
Friday 9 August
Location: Meet at Victorian Landcare Centre

Ian Higgins, NCCMA, and Elvyne Hogan, Trust for Nature, introduce strategies for managing remnant vegetation. Issues covered include what constitutes remnant vegetation, assessing conservation values and the condition of remnant bushland, how to enhance habitat and manage risks such as weed invasion, grazing & fire.

#2 Mapping - What Goes Where
Friday 23 August
Location: Newstead

This workshop introduces new vegetation mapping & analysis techniques to determine the original vegetation communities present at a site. Learn how to read the landscape, recognise plant communities and how to apply this understanding to the management and establishment of remnant native vegetation.

#3 Woodland Birds as Indicators of Ecosystem Health
Friday 6 September
Location: Maldon

In recent years many woodland birds have declined or disappeared from rural landscapes. Bird surveys can offer insights into the health of an environnment. Learn how to apply knowledge of woodland bird communities to guide the planning, protection, enhancement and restoration of native vegetation.

#4 Bioregional Planning

Friday 20 September
Location: Newstead

Bioregional Planning is a structured approach to mapping significant areas for native biodiversity conservation at the landscape and bioregional scales. Conservation actions can then be prioritised and co-ordinated. Involving local communities in this process is a valuable tool for gaining better on ground conservation outcomes. The workshop provides a practical, hands on introduction to the use of this
exciting new planning process.

#5 Monitoring
Friday 11 October
Location: Newstead

This workshop presents techniques for effective monitoring of remnant vegetation and vegetation establishment projects, eg: remnant vegetation assessments, bird survey techniques & photopoint monitoring. Learn how GPS and GIS technology can be used to record and analyse results and how this information can be used to inform management decisions.

Native Grassland Management Course
Thursday 24 - Friday 25 October
Location: Victorian Landcare Centre

Vanessa Craigie, NRE Native Grassland Coordinator, and Randall Robinson lead an interactive course in developing practical strategies and skills to retain, restore and revegetate native grassland communities in areas of different land uses. From new research and thinking learn basic management principles for native grasslands and pastures, including fire and grazing, and ways of planning and monitoring.

A FarmBi$ subsidised project
Accommodation and meals provided
Cost:

Koori Plants
Friday 8 November
Time: 10.00am - 1.30pm
Location: Victorian Landcare Centre

Dr Beth Gott will explain how Kooris managed the land in a sustainable way and how plants were used for food, fibre, medicines and other purposes. Visit Creswick Forest where Dr Gott will identify local plants used by Kooris. Local chef Richard Dobson will prepare a delicious morning tea using bush food ingredients.

Light refreshments, notes and transport provided
Cost: $45 / $30 concession

The Wonderful World of Waterplants
Sunday 17 November
Time: 9.30am - 4.30pm
Location: meet at Victorian Landcare Centre

In a tour of local wetlands Tim D'Ombrain will introduce participants to the broad range of waterplants in the Ballarat region. Learn their identification features and about the important roles they play in the web of life.

Supported by Central Highlands Waterwatch
BYO lunch
Light refreshments, notes and transport provided
FREE for Waterwatch monitors, others $35 / $20 concession

Keeping Up with the Grasses
Wednesday 4 December
Time: 4.30 - 7.30pm
Location: Meet at Victorian Landcare Centre

Ballarat's best known field naturalist Roger Thomas will introduce the common genera of local native grasses. Learn their anatomy and key identification features and visit local grassland sites to observe and identify many of these grasses in their natural setting.

Light refreshments, notes and transport provided
Cost: $35 / $20 concession

Other activities:

Tree Growing in Rural Landscapes Course
Commences March 2002

Landcare Facilitators Course
Commences March 2002

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-----Original Message-----
>From: Suresh Pathy [mailto:spathy@westconnect.com.au]
>Sent: Tuesday, 26 February 2002 8:32 PM
>To: National Forests; Vic Forests
>Subject: Secrets and Lies all over again
>
>
>Let's have a look at the scenario that was played out in Victoria last week.
>
>Bracks held media conference in secret, only those supportive of ongoing
>woodchipping were invited. Bracks sold Victoria a dog of a "solution". A
>solution that solves nothing except some problems facing the CFMEU and the
>logging industry.
>
>This package was such a dog that it was only saleable with "Greenwashing"
>and help from the WFS (Woodchip Forests Society). Without that veneer of
>environmental credibility the smell arising from this package would be
>obvious even to media in Victoria.
>
>The package does nothing except allow a graceful exit for loggers that have
>been living high on the hog for years. In the meantime Midways and the
>woodchip mill in East Gippsland have made it evident that they have been
>assured by Bracks that woodchipping will continue unaltered. It gets worse,
>Midways felt so confident that the Bracks solution would increase their
>woodchip volumes that they have increased their production capacity and
>bought a second wharf to deal with the bounty produced by Bracks and sold by
>the WFS (Woodchip Forests Society). Midways is the woodchipper of trees from
>the Wombat.
>
>I hope that subscribers to this list have had a chance to read "Secrets and
>Lies". Its pretty obvious that the new PR firm used by DNRE, Hawker Britten,
>has followed very much the same recipe used by Shandwick successfully in New
>Zealand. Let me quote from the book:
>
>Chapter 5 "Greenwashing"
>
>"identify third party endorsers to publicly support the plan"
>
>".tightly controlled programme aimed at getting quick approval for the
>project and minimising derailment by opponents of native forest logging."
>
>"The plans would be launched at a set of invitation only functions., in
>which the company hoped to control the news coverage by inviting selected
>journalists."
>
>Chapter 7 "Manufacturing Political Allies"
>
>"Allies in environmental organisations are especially valuable as they can
>give 'independent credibility' to logging plans. More important, they can be
>used to undermine the credibility of critical environmental organisations."
>
>I could spend a great deal of time transcribing very large segments of this
>book in relation to what happened last week. The similarities between the
>Shandwick campaign and that run by Hawker Britten are uncanny. I suspect
>that we will not have a "Secrets and Lies" style exposure in Victoria. The
>deals that have been done will remain secret and we will never know the
>truth.
>
>For the critical areas such as Central Highlands there is no change,
>business as usual. For most of the state all that has changed is recognition
>of the state of the forests for loggers, not for the environment.
>
>As for the claim by WFS (Woodchip Forests Society) that DNRE is going to be
>held accountable, Bracks showed how laughable this is. I heard Bracks
>interviewed on ABC radio. He was asked, "You have admitted that DNRE is
>incompetent and is the cause of the problems in our forests. Are you going
>to hold an inquiry and who are you going to sack from DNRE?"
>
>He answered, "Well all these problems occurred during the Kennett years. We

>sacked all those that needed sacking soon after taking office."
>
>In other words Bracks has wiped the slate clean. All those in DNRE have had
>their past sanctified by Bracks and can go into the privatised logging
>industry without sanction.
>
>For those of you wondering about the great success of the WFS (Woodchip
>Forests Society) in reducing logging in the Wombat Forest let's look at the
>state of play. There is to be no, I repeat no, reduction in area of forest
>logged in the Wombat this year and next year. DNRE has been clear that there
>was only two years of timber producing logs in the Wombat. All else was
>woodchips, this will continue for a further five years and then this totally
>trashed forest is to be handed over as a "Community Forest" for the WFS
>(Woodchip Forests Society) and friends to manage.
>
>I expect that I will receive a fair bit of flack over this, but for those
>that want to know what happened last week I would ask that you dust off
>"Secrets and Lies". Bob Burton warned us that the same campaigns would be
>used again here, and that we should learn our lessons from New Zealand and
>anticipate the campaign.
>
>Yours truly,
>
>Suresh Pathy

****
****

>Suresh,
>
>I think you comments are despicable. I have never met a bunch of more
>committed people to the forests than Loris Duclos, Tim Anderson and Peter
>O'Mara, people who have made REAL sacrifices in terms of their own personal
>lives in order to save forests. And they have done it with COMPASSION. And
>they have achieved an enormous amount. How dare you accuse them of being
>some kind of PR front group. You owe them an apology - immediately.
>
>Juliet Forsyth
>Barrister
>c/o Foley's List
>205 William St
>Melbourne 3000
>AUSDOC DX 92
>Tel (03) 9225 8874 (BH)
>Tel 0438 003 601 (M)
>Fax (03) 9225 8480
>Email: forsyth@menzies.aust.com
>

****
>Dear all,
>
>For the benefit of the National and the Victorian forest e-lists, I would
>like to repeat my congratulations to Tim Anderson and Loris Duclos, for
>their work on sustainable yield. I would also like to thank Peter O'Mara
>- a quiet achiever who is a brilliant community campaigner, and
>facilitator, and who has stuck by Tim and Loris through the continuous
>smear campaigns they have had to put up with through to their important
>outcome.
>
>The major difference between the WFS and other groups is that they have
>adopted a technical approach to forest protection, rather than more
>familiar methods of lobbying and protest. It is no mean feat to take the
>flawed assumptions of DNRE and prove, using a method that they have been
>forced to recognise as internally consistent to those assumptions, that
>they have significantly overestimated the amount of available timber in
>Victoria.
>
>For those who are unaware of the dynamic in Victoria, for some years now
>anyone who has dared to assess the work of the Wombat Forest Society on
>its merits is immediately denigrated, and labelled as being "aligned" with
>the WFS. A number of the people responsible for attacking the WFS are

>politically motivated; others appear to still be bitter from an
>acrimonious split from the WFS which occurred many years ago. It would
>be fair to say that some people spend more time agonising about how to
>shut down the WFS than thinking about how to combat DNRE. It is to our
>eternal shame as a movement that this kind of victimisation has not been
>stopped.
>
>In answer to Jill (who I don't include in the above description), by all
>means, let's be cynical about the ALP's motives, let's question the real
>impact of the outcome, and let's continue to campaign against
>woodchipping. But for the sake of the Victorian forest movement, let it
>be in a way that is respectful of individual campaigners, and in a way
>which will assist in building our campaigns rather than stripping our
>movement of important capacities. The question we need to ask ourselves,
>is how do we progress to the next step?
>
>Campaign groups and political organisations working to protect the Otways
>are now lobbying the state government to refuse the renewal of the annual
>residual log licences. If we are successful, that will take account of
>much of the other end of the equation, namely the woodchips. This is
>certainly going to be a lot easier task if there are fewer sawlog licences
>floating around.
>
>Regards
>Serena

>Subject: Secrets and Lies (part2)
>
>Dear Suresh,
>
>As a forest campaigner (both native forests and plantations) can you
>please explain to me where your theory of secrets and lies really fits?
>
>In regards to plantations we have a host of conservation groups
>thoughout the country lieing in bed with plantation companies who are
>bombarding water catchments with toxic herbicides. Through the
>uncritical and overzealous promotion of plantations and timber
>treatments we now have a situation where a wave of illnesses are now
>being reported by consumers and workers of pine through timber
>treatments such as CCA and PCP's. We have many pine plantations in
>Victoria now going into second rotation meaning that the water yield
>that these plantations will suck up will be enourmous and have huge
>consequences for downstream users. And yet the movement remains silent.
>
>Richard Pratts plantations alone will suck up millions of dollars per
>year yet greens say nothing. Some forest groups are actually sponsored
>by his company!? Work that one out. Is this not greenwashing? Why the
>double standard?
>
>Where do I go if I want environmental justice for people suffering
>illnesses of drinking herbicide tainted water and developing cancer from
>CCA? I sure as hell can't go to the forest movement can I, because most
>of the 'movement' sold out to the buggers years ago. We now have a
>situation where plantation companies are expanding exponentionally
>throughout Australia and most of the green movement are now hamstrung to
>do anything about it. We even get shot down by the 'movement' for
>taking the hardline stance of criticising both plantation and native
>forest logging.
>
>The movement (or should I say constipation) will give our campaign
>absolutely no support. I wonder why that is? Someone should do a
>research program on all the greenwashing that companies such as Auspine
>have received from the movement over the years. We nearly threw up when
>Auspine was being supported by the green movement about 10 years ago
>because at the same time they were the largest importers of Meranti in
>the country and that green support undermined our campaign in getting a
>ban on the importation of rainforest timber. Noone wrote a book about
>that did they?
>
>If you want to attack Wombat Forest Society over alleged greenwashing,
>be consistent and attack all those other groups who have been involved
>with plantation company greenwashing for the past decade and then I'll
>be happy.
>
>Regards
>
>Anthony Amis
>

Hello Marcus
Please find below, the letter sent to Adrian Whitehead re: local issues. I had sent it to you all but something went astray. Bob Harry & Tony Kelly have recieved a copy. I have sent this copy as email stuffed up somehow. Anyway, Adrian has responded which I have included below also.
Regards,
Peter O'Mara
Wombat Forest Society
ph: 5348-1154
****

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY
po box 428, daylesford 3460

18th February, 2002

To: Adrian Whitehead
Forest Co-Ordinator
The Greens

Hello Adrian,

I am writing to you, The Greens forest co-ordinator, regarding forest policy development and contact protocol.

During the Federal election, and more recently, in the establishment of the Wombat Forest Alliance, of which we do not belong, the local Greens made representation of supporting various local actions and campaign initiatives, most notably, the Cobaw and Wombat Forest Action Group transistion plan for the Wombat Forest, at local meetings and media.

Without wanting to play one approach against another, the Wombat Forest Society believe that The Greens support of some local forest issues has been rather hasten and without adequate community, and perhaps local branch, debate on the full environmental impacts and local implications. Personally, I provided support for the local Ballarat Greens campaign, but disappointingly, given my involvement in local forest issues, found myself at community meetings being told that The Greens, had selectively incorporated some campaign initiatives of other local forest groups, of which I believe promote a continuation of unsustainable logging and unrealsitic plantation outputs.

Obviously, The Greens need to provide local support and profile, but it would seem that it is a dangerous undertaking if such support is provided within the context of a local forest policy vacuum and inclusive engagement. The Wombat Forest Society would like to engage with The Greens in the development of such policy and build up an ongoing relationship with the local branches, perhaps intially, by making representation to a branch meeting.

My final thoughts involves the establishment of a contact protocol, relating to members of our local community and The Greens party. Recently, I was contacted by a local community member regarding to a meeting at Blackwood, chaired by Scott Kinnear (former Lead Senate Candidate) and advised her to contact him directly. I gave her Scott's home phone number, which understandably, he thought inappropriate due to family considerations, although he did indicate I could have provided his mobile number.

To avoid any further difficulties, I told Scott that I would contact you and local branches to establish a protocol for any future situation. The Wombat Forest Society believe that if The Greens are represented at a public meeting, then the local community deserve to further contact relating to these issues. The Wombat Forest Society has our phone number in the local directory for this exact purpose.

Anyway, could you get back to me relating to these issues.

The Wombat Forest Society look forward to working with The Greens for sustainable local outcomes.

Kindest Regards,
Peter O'Mara
Vice President
Wombat Forest Society
ph: 5348-1154

cc. Scott Kinnear Bob Harry Tony Kelly Marcus Ward
****

Response from Adrian Whitehead.....
Tony Kelly got it, I have yet to receive it. I have check my email log, its not there. Did you send it hard copy? If so to which address?

Adrian
I have quickly addressed some of the points below by adding comments to yours
I am interest in any input that you might have on the issue of producing a
logical transition package.
You are welcome to lobby local branches. Simply ring the office 09602 1141
and get the branch contacts details ring em up and ask if you can talk.
You can either pass the contact numbers of the branches onto people or tell
to ring the office and they will pass on appropriate details.
"If The Greens are represented at a public meeting, then the local
community deserve to further contact relating to these issues"
This sentence is not quite english (I tend not to write in english myself).
I assume you mean there should be some mechanism for follow up contact.
Again the Greens office or local branch contact details are the go.
At a statewide meeting of the Greens interested in forest issues it was
decided that we would adopt of policy of reaching a goal of no native
forest logging. This was adopted without argument by all, as each person
strongly saw this as our objective. Our goal is to shut down the native
forest industry. Any views to the contrary would be defeated by a vote.
Those members from your area support this line.
The lines we run will be simple "No native forest logging", only things
that vary at the moment are the concepts of transition. They vary from 20
years ago, to 15 or so years hence. I suspect we will reach a consensus
position somewhere in between, such as tomorrow.
I feel where The Greens forest campaign and WFS over lap consists of
overhauling of the DNRE (during the transition phase from our point of view).
You may have noticed I have not joined in the slanging match that has been
on the Vic / National email lists regarding the Huge Win. Personally I feel
the war of words is a waste of time, people should be out there campaigning
on there views not trying to convince those holding the opposite view to
change.
On a personal note I think we are heading into dangerous times with
forests, where we may be forced to defend what we saved, let alone save any
more.
I wish you all the best in your campaign.
Adrian

Eight years ago a delegation from the Daylesford community arranged to meet with the then State Minister for Natural Resources, the hon. Geoff Coleman, to voice community concerns regarding both sustainability issues and the logging method or silviculture being employed in the Wombat State Forest.

The delegation consisted of qualified, experienced and licensed timber workers involved in forest management and instruction; a renowned author on landcare, permaculture and world's best practise sustainable forestry systems and a retired engineer.

Far from being a "green" delegation that sought to have logging halted or the Wombat State Forest turned into a National Park, our agenda was clear and I quote:

"It is the firm and unwavering objective of our delegation to ensure that the Wombat State Forest is protected environmentally and for the long term by the world's best logging practices and we will continue to press for major changes to those practices being presently undertaken and which are endorsed by your government."

The delegation presented unrefuted evidence and statistics raising serious doubts regarding the Department's sustainability figures and also showed that the logging method of two stage clearfell was not addressing any of the non timber values. It was shown that not only would the continuation of this regimen impact severely on all the other forest values, but that it would also lead to job losses and insecurity within the timber industry.

It is distressing that recent vindication of our concerns was so delayed allowing the forest resource to become seriously depleted and industry security jeopardized. Ongoing pressure from certain segments of the timber industry to maintain quotas far in excess of the sustainable level is the age-old cause of the problem. Certainly Black Forest Sawmill and Midways Woodchips have much to answer regarding the demise of our local timber industry.

In 1994 the Minister informed our delegation that 'the government had a legal contract to supply a specific quota of timber and to maintain required woodchip tonnages and would suffer a financial penalty if the contract terms were not met'! Basically short term financial interests were placed above other forest values, longevity and security for industry.

It is commendable that the Bracks government is now tackling the sustainability issue with the necessary compensation packages being devised and the restructuring of DNRE. By removing the commercial arm of forestry from the Dept of Natural Resources and Environment the conflict of interest will no longer exist.

On the issue of logging method and in response to Norman Endacott's "forest history lesson" in the Advocate (20th Feb) in which he strongly advocates "clearfelling" I would like to offer an alternative.

Norman states that a 25% selective cut taking out the worst trees and leaving the best with the hope of improving the future forest failed. He then takes a quantum leap and says we must clearfell! Norman, what about a 50% cut along the same lines?

Coupe 192/506/02 Quartz track at Bullarto (Coliban) is one such coupe. At my request in 1994 this coupe was harvested with a low intensity shelterwood one cut. This is almost identical to "heavy selective thinning". This meant that about 50% of the trees were harvested thus maintaining much of the forest biodiverstity. Following harvest regeneration was completely adequate (ie much more light allowed in than a 25% harvest) and a regeneration burn was also not required. This allowed all the young spas or saplings to remain undamaged and has led to a mixed aged, healthy and well stocked forest that addresses all forest values.

It is an excellent example of balanced forest management and was performed specifically to address other forest values and amenity, not only timber production. As it turned out it has also proved an exemplary example for sustainable timber production. By harvesting 50% of the coupe the fuel burden and threat of fire was reduced which was further reduced by continuous firewood collection over the last 8 years. This coupe will produce an ongoing supply of quality sawlog for industry should it continue to be managed in this way.

Norman's reference to "efficient effective production forestry…..wondrous clearfelling" is disturbing in that it is this very approach that has led to so much confrontation and community opposition to logging. It is an economical approach that does not address any forest values other than unsustainable short-term production forestry that supplies five times as much woodchip as sawlog.

Our community and our forest need bipartisan support, not polarisation. Industry working together with the community towards a truly sustainable world's best practice harvesting prescription that, whilst respecting all competing forest values and amenity ensures a truly sustainable supply of sawlog, firewood, lowgrade product and woodchip to industry. A practise that is economically viable in the long term.

Best practice silviculture decrees that it is the forest that determines the level of supply – not quotas demanded by industry or those already signed. In regions of peak tourism and natural beauty such as the Otways, the old growth of forests of Gippsland and the mineral spring region of Daylesford we must seek a balance. A forestry practice of which we can be proud and demonstrate in a world forum.

Gary McIntosh
Bullarto

Gary McIntosh
Forest Management Consultancy
PO Box 232
Daylesford Vic 3460
Ph 03 53485691

horsemastership@hotmail.com
"sustainable and ecologically sound forestry practices"

SUBMISSION re 2002/2003 WUP
DATE \@ "MMMM d, yyyy" March 6, 2002
General Comment:
There are major shortcomings in the proposed 2002/2003 wups, namely
High intensity shelterwood (two stage clearfell) method of harvest is technically in breach of the RFA and Midlands Forest Management plan as this logging method does not address any alternative forest values other than short term unsustainable timber and woodchip production. This is the major cause of overlogging, community opposition and lack of supply DNRE is facing at present.
Adjacency of coupes are technically in breach of RFA and Midlands Forest Management Plan – shelterwood two cuts cannot be ignored in adjacency and aggregate area limitations
This regimen will destroy any chance of maintaining a sustainable timber supply and will have serious detrimental effects on all other forest values. ie. wildlife, amenity re tourism and recreation possibilities, eco-tourism etc
It should be noted that the shelterwood system of harvest (both cuts) is far too intense to be used as a blanket system across the entire forest. Selective thinning systems should be used which are not that different from low intensity shelterwood one cuts. Shelterwood two cuts should be abandoned. Please see attached letter.
In several special management zones alternative methods of harvest and the necessary reduced yield calculations have not been detailed.

Specific Comment:
Coupe Name: Babbington Rd, COLIBAN
Number: 06/208/506/0012
Size: 30ha
Comment:
In2000 Andrew Maclean gave assurances that this coupe (and the Leitches Creek POMA) would not be harvested for at least ten years.
The southern portion lies in a SMZ that is the direct catchment of Bullarto Reservoir.
The rest of the coupe is in view of two designated high sensitivity tourist routes and therefore should also be treated as a Special Management Zone. DNRE removed this coupe from the wups last year. I expect it to remain removed from these recent wups.
To reiterate:
The northern portion is in mid-range view of the Daylesford/Malmsbury Rd and the top of Babbington Hill (remainder of coupe) is in close proximity and full view of the busy Daylesford/Trentham Rd!
The Midlands Forest Management Plan clearly states that logging in these areas should be shaped, positioned and timed to minimize visual impact.
Minimize – reduce to smallest possible amount or degree (Oxford dictionary)
If the management plan is to be followed regarding 'timing to minimize visual impact', no further logging should take place on Babbington Hill until the intensely harvested adjacent areas have regenerated and regrowth has reached a substantial height.
This issue of TIMING must be adhered to!
DNRE must be aware that the top of Babbington Hill can be seen from all directions whilst driving along the Daylesford/Trentham Rd. It is the most prominent forested hill viewable when entering the Daylesford mineral springs region.
DNRE must follow the Midlands Forest Management Plan with the full detail and purpose with which it is written and postpone logging on Babbington Hill. When logging does finally resume, the community and WFS wish to be consulted regarding the logging method as a heavy SH1 cut will not be tolerated in this SMZ.

Coupe Name: Babbington Hill, COLIBAN
Number: 06/208/506/0011
Size: 38ha
Comment:
This coupe was shown on last years wups as not encroaching on the Leitches Creek POMA, however this year it seems to go right up to Babbington Rd well within the POMA! Is this a mapping error or DNRE testing our resolve? Please remove western portion in POMA from wups.
This coupe also lies in an SMZ due to the same reasons as the previous one – that is high sens.amenity from Day/Trenth Rd. It is the high canopy of this coupe that can be viewed and a gap through the bush must be avoided
Please show alternative logging method, independent landscape report and appropriately reduced yield.

Coupe Name:
Number: 06/208/501/09
Size:
Comment:

Coupe encroaches northern side of Leitches Crk POMA

Gary McIntosh

Attachments:
"seeking a balancefinal.doc"
Please see attached letter regarding urgent review of logging method required. The legitimacy of the current method is highly debatable. Although the letter addresses other issues, a positive alternative to the current logging regimen is offered. It may or may not be of interest to you.

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY
po box 428, daylesford, 3460

PRESS RELEASE
11th April, 2001

LERDERDERG LOGGING COUPE RESOLUTION

The Wombat Forest Society has successfully negotiated the modification of logging in the disputed Lerderderg coupe with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

The Lerderderg logging coupe will now include a 100 metre Special Protection Zone on the Upper Lerderderg River, creating a new wildlife corridor. Also a low intensity logging application will be applied to protect non-timber & visual amenity values.

“The Wombat Forest Society are sastified with the low intesity of logging and the Special Protection Zone. We acknowledge NRE upon maintaining a flexible approach in relation to this coupe.” says Peter O’Mara, Vice-President Wombat Forest Society.

The Wombat Forest Society has contacted our local State members to facilitate an immediate review of these local stream perscriptions involving NRE, logging contractors, Catchment Management Authority, water bodies, local environment groups and community.

“Unless we can resolve these issues, the transistion to a sustainable industry will be a difficult one,” says Peter O’Mara

Furthermore to the Special Protection Zone, the Wombat Forest Society were able to have a low intensity logging application applied. The Lerdederg coupe will now be selectively logged to retain 50% canopy cover and the retention of mixed class trees. The Wombat Forest Society believe that the low intensity logging will maximise the restoration of the original forest structure and protect ecological function.

“At the end of the day, the logging contractors are able to continue their work while the community is provided environmental protection of our other important forest values. The Wombat Forest Society has always respected our local forest workers and believe that this relationship enabled this low intensity alternative to eventuate. Despite interrupting their working schedule, the Howard logging contractors played a constructive role in this outcome. The Wombat Forest Society thank both the loggers and NRE for the resolution of a difficult situation,” says Peter O’Mara.

Subject: RE: WFS PRESS RELEASE

Hello Emma,
Find below my final dreft of the Press Release.
In relation to the NRE Press Release 'NRE reaches agreement with environmentalists"
I would like to comment if this particular statement is included. Thank-You.
> My only difficulty is with this statement by Peter Keppels.....
"Forest workers have been continually interrupted throughout the district by forest protestors who believe that confrontation is the only way to negotiate"
> Peter O'Mara
> Wombat Forest Society
> ph: 5348-1154
p.s. Louise Martin's NRE Communications & Media Officer email is <**Error! Bookmark not defined.**> & phone number is 0417 031 576
****
> REVISED PRESS RELEASE
>

WOMBAT FOREST SOCIETY

po box 428, daylesford, 3460

PRESS RELEASE
12th April, 2001

LERDERDERG LOGGING COUPE RESOLUTION

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