

# Managing the Butlers State Forest

Land use of the Butlers area was resolved with the adoption of the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) in 1997. Through the RFA an additional 4,000 hectares of State forest in the Beech-Counsel area was added to the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park. The National Park now totals some 446,000 hectares.

An area of about 7,000 hectares remains as Butlers State Forest and is available for timber production.

Butlers State Forest is an important part of the Statewide sustainable supply of high quality veneer logs and sawlogs and is part of the existing timber production area of the Central Highlands, potentially yielding about 10 percent of the Derwent District annual supply.

Butlers State Forest is highly regarded for both its natural forest landscape and for its valuable timber products. Mindful of this, the Derwent District Planning Team has put forward a low impact forest management system for the area, thus securing a measured balance between conservation and production.



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## The Plan Area

The Plan Area comprises an area known as Butlers State Forest and covers about 7000 hectares.

Butlers State Forest is part of the multiple use forests of Tasmania agreed under the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) and approved by both State and Federal Parliaments. Under the RFA, State forests are available for timber production and other uses.

Through the RFA, over 4,000 hectares of State forest in the Beech-Counsel area were added to the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park.

## Planning Process

This Plan was prepared in accordance with the *Derwent District Forest Management Plan* (Forestry Tasmania, 1999), which states that:

"A tactical plan will be prepared with public consultation and prior to operations commencing for that part of the Beech-Counsel area, previously on the Register of Deferred Forest Land, and not now included in an extended National Park."

In December 2002 Forestry Tasmania published a draft Plan and sought public comment on how the area should be managed to achieve the forest management outcomes outlined. The amended Butlers Plan was prepared after public comments were received and analysed and was subsequently approved by Forestry Tasmania Executive.

The Butlers Plan identifies specific initiatives that are intended to apply to the Butlers State Forest over and above the prescriptions that are already detailed in the *Derwent District Forest Management Plan*. Therefore the Butlers Plan should be read in conjunction with the *Derwent District Forest Management Plan*.

The *Derwent District Forest Management Plan* was prepared in accordance with Section 22 of the *Forestry Act 1920* and involved significant community participation through two public comment periods that were widely advertised. The *Derwent District Forest Management Plan* was gazetted in May 1999 and along with the Butlers Plan will apply for a period of 10 years from that date.

It is possible that new issues, research findings or changed circumstances may be of sufficient significance to warrant amendment of the Plan prior to its expiry. If amendments are required Forestry Tasmania will advertise and invite comments.

## Management Prescriptions

### *Forest Types*

The Butlers State Forest is composed mainly of *Eucalyptus delegatensis* forest types. There are some areas of *E. pauciflora* forest, *E. rodwayi* forest, rainforest and non-forest. Wherever prudent and feasible areas of old growth *E. pauciflora* forest and *E. rodwayi* forest will be reserved under the CAR reserve system of the RFA.

### *Timber Production*

About 70% (5000 hectares) of the area carries commercial timber suitable for harvesting. There is in excess of 300,000 m<sup>3</sup> of current high quality sawlog/veneer log and at least 1.2 million tonnes of current pulpwood, low quality sawlog and peeler log. This translates to an estimated market value of some \$175 million in wood production terms.

On average 150 hectares of Butlers State Forest may be sustainably harvested and regrown each year.

### *Forest Management*

The *E. delegatensis* forest types are suited to a range of forest harvesting options other than clearfelling. Where it is safe and practical to do so Forestry Tasmania will conduct "low impact" forest management in Butlers State Forest.

Low impact initiatives planned include:

- oldgrowth coupes harvested with no clearfelling;
- no softwood or hardwood plantations to be established;
- no 1080 to be used on native fauna species;
- where conditions allow fuel reduction and regeneration will be through use of low intensity fire rather than with high intensity fire associated with clearfell operations; and
- regeneration to native forest with the same tree species composition.

"Low impact" forest management may add to production and management costs and these costs will be monitored.

Oldgrowth coupes in the Plan Area may be selectively harvested using a variety of silvicultural systems such as shelterwood, potential sawlog retention and advance growth retention. The progressive results of the alternative silvicultural trials at Warra (see [www.warra.com](http://www.warra.com)) would be taken into account to formulate other non-clearfell silvicultural options for the management of oldgrowth coupes in the Butlers State Forest.

### *Tourism & Interpretation*

The Butlers State Forest currently provides limited opportunities for general tourism due to the unsafe and unreliable Derwent River crossing. Construction of a safe river crossing and forest roads would enable potential tourism development, and for this purpose a "recreation zone" (see map) has been identified. Any proposed tourism developments will be progressed in consultation with the Parks and Wildlife Service and the Central Highlands Council.

Access to the existing bushwalking route to Mt Hobhouse and some destinations within the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park currently requires crossing the Clark Dam. Alterations to bushwalker access to areas on State forest and to the National Park will be implemented in consultation with the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Low impact forestry interpretation and visitor facilities will be provided in consultation with interested stakeholders.

### *Access*

To provide access to timber and recreation areas a network of roads would be required in the Plan Area. This road network will need to be constructed and maintained to minimise environmental damage and to a standard required for timber harvesting, forest management purposes and for access by the general public.

### *Beekeeping*

The area is wholly contained within a 61,500 hectare Black Bee Reserve declared under the Animal Health Act 1995. The Act prohibits honeybees (other than the Black Bee) to be moved into the area. Forestry Tasmania will only permit Black Bees to be moved into the Plan Area.

### *Fauna*

Habitat for the threatened quoll, the wedge-tailed eagle, and possibly for goshawk and white-bellied sea eagle, is present in the Plan Area. Any threatened fauna will be reserved or managed by prescription.

### *Flora*

Several threatened flora species have been identified during botanical surveys of the Plan Area, these are largely contained within those forest communities already reserved under the RFA. Any threatened flora will be reserved or managed by prescription.

### *Geomorphology*

Geomorphological surveys of the Plan Area indicate that it is unlikely that large areas exhibit landform features of high conservation significance, however a set of landforms of potential periglacial origin were identified and reserved. Further surveys may be required during operational planning and any sites warranting protection will be reserved or managed by prescription.

### *Soil & Water*

Forestry Tasmania plans to manage the forests to maintain water quality, mainly by reserving strips of uncut forest alongside streams and by distributing logging in space and time.

Downstream water users are unlikely to be affected due to the nature of the soil types in the Plan Area, and the proposed low impact management strategy.

### *Cultural Heritage*

While no sites of Aboriginal significance have yet been recorded in the Butlers State Forest, Forestry Tasmania will continue to seek advice and survey assistance from the Aboriginal community. Evidence of European occupation of the Plan Area is principally associated with hydro developments in the 1940s and from mineral exploration in the 1960s. Any sites warranting protection will be reserved or managed by prescription.

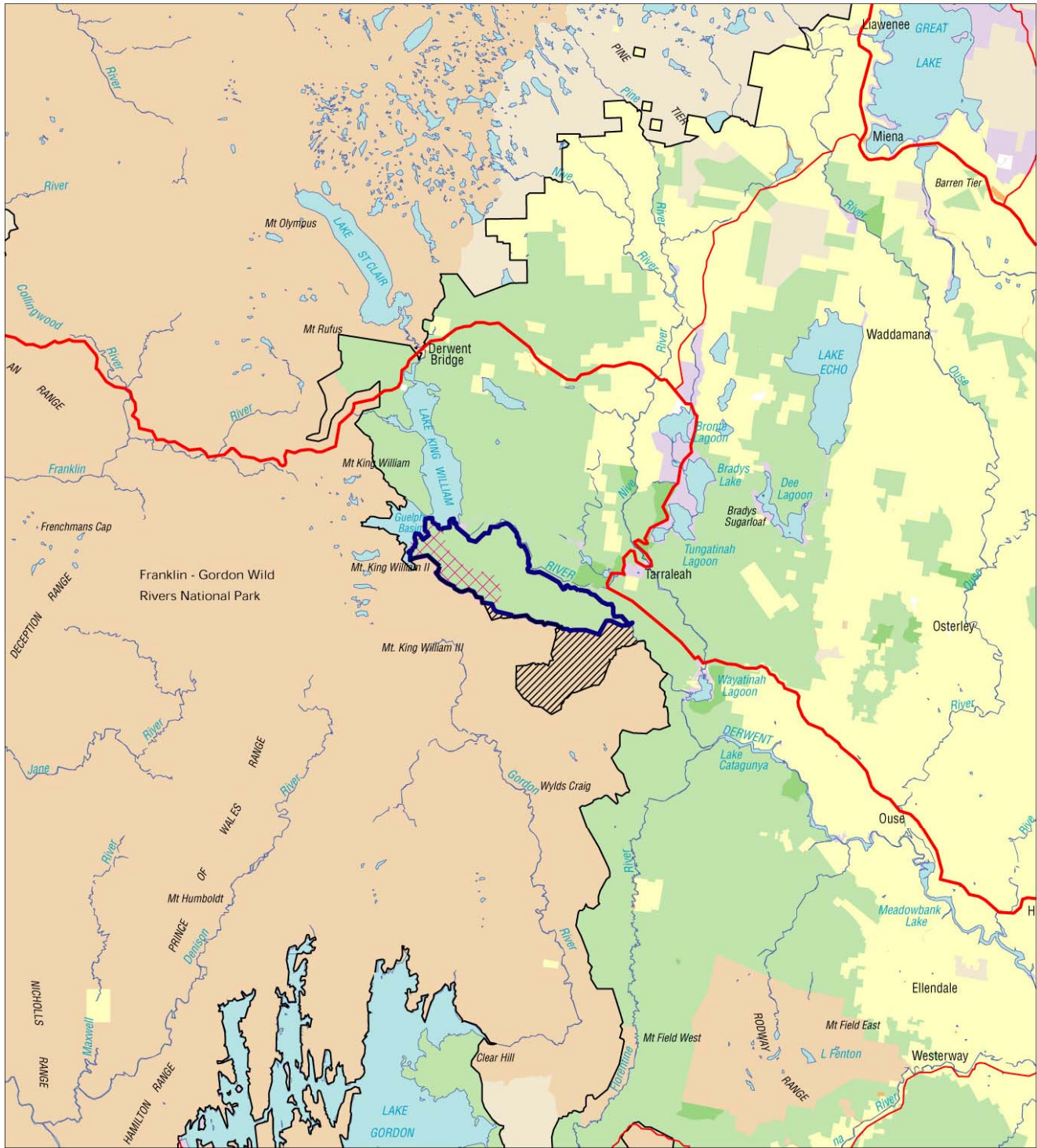
### **Operational Planning**

Operational details for timber harvesting are described in the annually updated three year wood production plan and forest practices plans which are available for inspection at the Forestry Tasmania Derwent District office in Hobart. Forest operations are required to comply with the provisions of the *Forest Practices Code* (Forest Practices Board 2000).



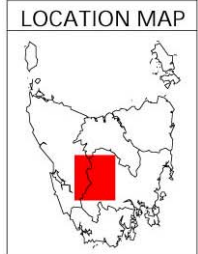
Butlers *E. delegatensis* forest

Photo: Forestry Tasmania




NOTE: Any topographic data on this map has been supplied by DPIWE.

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|  Butlers Planning Boundary          |  National Park, Historic Site & Nature/State Reserve              |
|  World Heritage Area Boundary       |  Game & Regional Reserves, Nature Recreation & Conservation Areas |
|  RFA additions to the National Park |  HEC land - Vested or Private                                     |
|  Butlers Recreational Zone          |  Water  |
|  State Forest                       |  A Class - Major Govt. Highways                                   |
|  Forest Reserve                     |  B Class - Govt. Highways (Primary Road)                          |
|  Private Property                   |  |



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Scale 1:500000  


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Additional copies of this Plan are available from Forestry Tasmania District offices as well as from the web site at [www.forestrytas.com.au](http://www.forestrytas.com.au)