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Submission ID: 204873

Organisation: N/A

Location: New South Wales

Supporting materials uploaded: N/A

Submission date: 10/13/2024 2:25:57 PM

Topic 1. Sustainability of current and future forestry operations in NSW

The current management of state forests is not sustainable and is a major contributor to the extinction crisis, removing threatened species habitat and transforming native forests into simple forest structures that lack the diversity to support all the species that once occupied these forests. I support a change of management to improve sustainability which includes immediate expansion of the plantation estate, with a goal of a 100% plantation-based timber industry, and government transition plans for communities impacted by transition out of native forest logging.

Topic 2. Environmental and cultural values of forests, including threatened species and Aboriginal cultural heritage values

I am an ecologist who has been working on the north coast of NSW for over 20 years.

I currently work for an NGO on a project funded by the NSW Environmental Trust major projects grants stream. The project is working to conserve large forest owls and other hollow dependent fauna on the north coast NSW which were impacted by the 2019/20 bushfires and surrounding landscape. The project includes an extensive monitoring program using a network of passive acoustic monitoring sites to monitor the recovery a range of nocturnal species, and is supported by nocturnal surveys and mapping and protection of hollow bearing trees.

Current work, as well as previous ecological assessment and monitoring program has given me a detailed knowledge of the status of many threatened species in this region, particularly large forest owls (Barking Owl, Powerful Owl, Masked Owl and Sooty Owl), as well as gliders and other hollow dependent fauna.

The project has documented the loss and damage to Barking Owl nest trees as well as the loss of 22.4% of large hollow bearing trees in fire affected landscapes (Milledge and Soderquist 2022). The loss of 22.4% of hollow bearing trees in a single fire event is concerning, particularly as the hollow density in these forests have already been significantly reduced due to clearing for agriculture and private native forestry operations. It is even more concerning when considered under the predicted increase in extreme weather events due to climate change which increase the likelihood of similar wildfire events.

Our survey work is showing the population of yellow bellied-glidiers and southern greater gliders on the coastal lowlands of Richmond and Clarence valleys have been significantly impacted by the 2019 bushfires. The recovery of these large gliders has been poor compared with smaller gliders such as the squirrel gliders and sugar gliders, with the possibility of localised extinction in some areas. Further survey work is underway, and publication of results is planned in the future. An EPA review released in September 2020 found: 'Fauna populations surviving in fire refuges in state forests are at risk of elimination by timber harvesting under the normal CIFOA which could prevent recovery, and cause catastrophic population decline in species such as the Koala, Greater Glider and Yellow-bellied Glider.'

The network of State Forests on the north coast currently provides important habitat for a range of hollow dependent species, particularly in unburnt areas. In some instances, these forest and the remaining hollow bearing trees, may be providing the only refuge for these threatened

species. However these sites are under threat from ongoing forestry operations which are further impacting these species adding to the threatening processes which are contributing to their decline. If this continues it is likely the habitat features which these species rely on will be lost, and these species will be driven to extinction.

NSW Forest Corporation has demonstrated they are no good at either business, timber production or land manager. Despite generous government handout totaling over \$200million in past 5 years, they recorded a loss of over \$20 last year. And in the process they contributed to key threatening process further driving the extinction crisis, and driving up emissions.

This is however avoidable. The cessation of native forest logging is the only remedy. The forestry prescription in place are insufficient to protect the forests and habitat, and the modification of habitat that is caused by forestry operations creating an environment that does not support hollow dependent fauna. Rules that regulate Forestry Corporation NSW's (FCNSW) logging operations, the Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (CIFOAs), were not developed to account for the scale or severity of the fires experienced during the Black Summer bushfires. Clearly the Forestry Corporation are unwilling to comply with the very lax requirements currently in place to protect environmental values. They have been convicted 14 times and fined \$100,000's. They were recently fined \$360,000 for criminal damage to 53 mature trees in fire impacted areas.

Topic 3. Demand for timber products, particularly as relates to NSW housing, construction, mining, transport and retail

No more native forest logging. Plantations are the way to go!

Topic 4. The future of softwood and hardwood plantations and the continuation of Private Native Forestry in helping meet timber supply needs

I fully support an immediate end to native forest logging and a future industry based on sustainable plantation. There is no longer any need to log public native forests to build houses. Plantations can supply our high quality and composite timber products. Shifting to plantation timber reduces pressure on native forests, supporting improved industry practices.

The true value of our native forests comes from their critical role in carbon storage, providing a clean and reliable water supply, providing critical habitat, recreation and spiritual connection.