

6UVS RADIO TALK

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IN LOOKING FORWARD TO A STATE CONSERVATION STRATEGY AS IT APPLIES TO OUR FORESTS IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL FIRST TO CONSIDER THE MAIN POINTS FROM THE 1980 WORLD CONSERVATION STRATEGY WHICH REFER TO FORESTS.

THE MAIN POINTS FROM THE WORLD CONSERVATION STRATEGY ARE:

1. MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS SHOULD BE ON A SUSTAINABLE BASIS,
2. THE PRINCIPAL GOAL OF FOREST MANAGEMENT ON WATER CATCHMENTS SHOULD BE THE PROTECTION OF THE CATCHMENT.
3. GENETIC DIVERSITY IN FORESTS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED
4. REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLES OF VEGETATION TYPES SHOULD BE SET ASIDE FROM NORMAL USE..
5. THERE SHOULD BE SENSIBLE PLANNING OF LAND USE.

ALL THESE POINTS ARE DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO OUR SITUATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND IT IS OF NOTE THAT ALL OF THEM WERE SET OUT AS OBJECTIVES IN THE FORESTS DEPARTMENT'S GENERAL WORKING PLAN NO86 IN 1977, SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE THE APPEARANCE OF THE WORLD CONSERVATION STRATEGY, SO WE ARE A LONG WAY TOWARD MEETING THOSE GOALS ALREADY.

THE GENERAL WORKING PLAN I HAVE REFERRED TO IS A PUBLISHED DOCUMENT WHICH LISTS OBJECTIVES OF FOREST MANAGEMENT AND SETS OUT HOW THE OBJECTIVES ARE TO BE ACHIEVED. IT IS REVISED AT FIVE - YEARLY INTERVALS.

THE FIRST POINT FROM THE WORLD CONSERVATION STRATEGY, THAT FORESTS SHOULD BE MANAGED ON A SUSTAINED YIELD BASIS, IS A BASIC TENET OF FORESTRY ALL OVER THE WORLD.

IN RESPECT OF OUR COMMERCIAL FORESTS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA, WE HAVE NOT YET ACHIEVED SUSTAINED YIELD, NOR WILL WE FOR A VERY LONG TIME, BUT OUR LONG TERM MANAGEMENT PLANS AND PROCEDURES ARE DESIGNED TO GET US THERE.

THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINED YIELD IS A VERY COMPLEX ONE, AND ITS ACHIEVEMENT REQUIRES A LONG PERIOD OF PLANNING AND EFFORT IN THAT DIRECTION. SHORT TERM CHANGES IN FOREST POLICY OR NATURAL DISASTERS CAN HAVE DISASTROUS EFFECTS ON PROGRESS TOWARD SUSTAINED YIELD. WE THEREFORE NEED LONG TERM STABILITY OF PURPOSE IN FOREST MANAGEMENT AND A VERY EFFICIENT FOREST PROTECTION SYSTEM.

IT IS NOT GENERALLY REALIZED THAT IT TAKES AT LEAS. ONE PHYSICAL ROTATION, THAT IS, THE TIME FOR A TREE TO REACH PHYSICAL MATURITY, TO ACHIEVE A ~~PROPERLY~~ PROPERLY MANAGED FOREST IN WHICH A SUSTAINED YIELD IS POSSIBLE. IN PINE THIS PERIOD OF TIME COULD BE AS SHORT AS 40 YEARS, BUT IN JARRAH IT MAY TAKE 200 YEARS.

WE ARE PLANNING FOR SUSTAINED YIELD IN THREE PRINCIPAL SPECIES - KARRI, JARRAH AND PINE. SO FAR, THERE IS A LONG TERM PLAN IN EXISTENCE ONLY FOR KARRI, AND THIS HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN OUR BOOKLET "CONSERVATION OF THE KARRI FOREST". THERE IS A HYPOTHETICAL PLAN FOR PINES, ALTHOUGH THE LEVEL OF SUSTAINED YIELD DEPENDS LARGELY ON THE LEVEL OF PINE PLANTING WE WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS.

FOR JARRAH, THE SITUATION IS COMPLICATED BY VERY SLOW GROWTH RATES, A MUCH GREATER RANGE OF MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES, AN UNKNOWN FINAL IMPACT OF DIEBACK DISEASE AND CONTINUED LOSSES OF PRODUCTIVE FOREST DUE TO BAUXITE MINING IN OUR FORESTS. I FRANKLY DO NOT KNOW WHEN WE WILL BE ABLE TO SET A PROPER SUSTAINED YIELD FOR JARRAH.

OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS OR SO, WE PLAN TO DRASTICALLY REDUCE THE CUT IN OUR HARDWOOD FORESTS, BUT MAINTAIN LOCAL TIMBER SUPPLIES AT APPROX. THEIR PRESENT LEVEL BY SUBSTITUTING LOCALLY GROWN PINE. THIS POLICY WILL CAUSE MINIMAL DISRUPTION TO LOCAL INDUSTRIES AND COMMUNITIES WHILE GIVING US BREATHING SPACE TO WORK TOWARDS THE GOAL OF SUSTAINED YIELD IN THE JARRAH FOREST.

WHILE THE PINE PLANTING PROGRAMME WAS FORMERLY LARGELY ON REPURCHASED FARMLAND, THIS IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE DUE TO ESCALATING LAND PRICES, SHORTAGE OF LAND AND OPPOSITION TO OUR LAND PURCHASE POLICY BY FARMERS AND SOME LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES. IT HAS BECOME NECESSARY TO CONVERT SOME POOR QUALITY JARRAH FOREST TO PINE, BUT THIS IS CONSIDERED AN ACCEPTABLE TRADE-OFF IN THE LONG TERM.

WITH REGARD TO THE SECOND POINT FROM THE WORLD CONSERVATION STRATEGY, THAT PROTECTION OF CATCHMENT VALUES SHOULD BE THE PRINCIPAL GOAL OF FOREST MANAGEMENT ON WATER CATCHMENTS, BOTH PUBLISHED GENERAL WORKING PLAN ARE QUITE EMPHATIC THAT THE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE IS "TO MANAGE STATE FOREST CATCHMENTS NEEDED FOR WATER SUPPLIES SO AS TO MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE WATER QUANTITY AND QUALITY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WATER SUPPLY AUTHORITIES" IT IS ACCEPTED THAT ANY OTHER PURSUITS ON CATCHMENTS FOR EXAMPLE WOOD PRODUCTION, ARE ENTIRELY SUBSIDIARY TO THAT OBJECTIVE. WE HAVE VERY CLOSE CO-OPERATION AND JOINT RESEARCH PROGRAMMES WITH OUR WATER AUTHORITIES.

MAINTENANCE OF GENETIC DIVERSITY IS ACCEPTED AS A DESIRABLE AIM AND IS THE REASON FOR SOME OF OUR MANAGEMENT PRACTICES. FOR EXAMPLE, WE DO NOT USE SEED OF KARRI COLLECTED FROM THE DIFFERENT ECOLOGICAL ZONES OF KARRI OUTSIDE THEIR ZONE OF ORIGIN. WE HAVE ALSO ESTABLISHED GENE BANKS OF SOME OF THE MORE RARE WEST AUSTRALIAN EUCALYPTS TO ENSURE THEIR PRESERVATION IN CASE OF A DISASTER IN THEIR NATURAL HABITAT.

WE ARE ONE OF THE WORLD LEADERS IN APPLIED TREE BREEDING AND ARE WELL PLACED TO APPRECIATE AND EXPLOIT THE GENETIC DIVERSITY IMPROVEMENT IN FOREST TREES.

GENETIC DIVERSITY IS ALSO CATERED FOR, IN A DIFFERENT SENSE, BY THE SETTING ASIDE FROM NORMAL COMMERCIAL USE OF SOME 20% OF THE FOREST ESTATE TO BE MANAGED FOR THE PRESERVATION OF FLORA AND FAUNA OR FOR PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE. BEARING IN MIND THE OTHER PRESSURES ON OUR VERY LIMITED ARE OF FOREST, THIS IS A VERY REASONABLE PRO-PORTION TO BE SET ASIDE IN THIS WAY.

THESE MANAGEMENT PRIORITY AREAS FOR FLORA, FAUNA AND LANDSCAPE COVER THE ENTIRE STATE FOREST AREA. IT WAS DEVELOPED IN THE MID 1970s AND IS ONE OF THE FIRST EXAMPLES OF ECOSYSTEM PRESERVATION ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. ALL THESE AREAS ARE LISTED IN THE GENERAL WORKING PLAN AND NO CHANGE IN PURPOSE IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE DIRECT APPROVAL OF THE CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS.

THE FINAL POINT FROM THE WORLD CONSERVATION STRATEGY, LAND USE PLANNING, HAS ALWAYS BEEN A MATTER OF GREAT CONCERN TO FORESTERS. THIS CONCERN BEGAN WITH THE EARLY BATTLES TO RETAIN FORESTS FROM ALIENATION FOR AGRICULTURE AND HAVE THEM DEDICATED AS STATE FORESTS, AND CONTINUED IN MORE RECENT YEARS WITH THE ZONATION OF THE STATE FORESTS INTO VARIOUS MANAGEMENT PRIORITY AREAS.

THE STATE FOREST IS NOW MANAGED UNDER A MULTIPLE USE POLICY IN WHICH EACH AREA IS ALLOCATED A DOMINANT USE, SUCH AS FOR WATER PRODUCTION, WOOD PRODUCTION, SCIENTIFIC STUDY AND EDUCATION, RECREATION AND PRESERVATION OF FLORA, FAUNA AND THE LANDSCAPE.

THE 1982 GENERAL WORKING PLAN PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME OUR DRAFT LAND USE PLAN FOR THE WHOLE OF STATE FOREST. I SAY A DRAFT LAND USE PLAN BECAUSE THERE ARE STILL SOME AREAS OF UNCERTAINTY, PARTICULARLY IN THE NORTHERN JARRAH FOREST WHICH IS COVERED BY THE SYSTEM 6 STUDY. IN THIS AREA, SAY FROM THE BLACKWOOD RIVER NORTH TO THE MOORE RIVER, THESE ARE A

NUMBER OF CONFLICTS BETWEEN OUR PROPOSALS AND THOSE OF OTHER USERS OF THE FOREST. WE AWAIT A RESOLUTION OF THE SYSTEM 6 STUDY BEING CONDUCTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT BEFORE WE CAN REACH ANY FINALITY HERE.

THE PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR PUBLISHING THE GENERAL WORKING PLAN ARE TO INFORM THE PUBLIC ON OUR MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND THE REASONS FOR THEM, AND TO PROMOTE INFORMED DEBATE ON THE VARIOUS ISSUES. CONSTRUCTIVE PUBLIC COMMENT ON EACH PLAN IS USED IN FORMULATION OF EACH NEW PLAN.

NOW, IN RESPECT OF AREAS WHICH NEED SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR A CONSERVATION STRATEGY FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA, I THINK THERE ARE THREE MAIN PROBLEM AREAS. THE FIRST ONE IS THE PROBLEM OF CONTINUING THE PINE PLANTING PROGRAMME IN A TIME OF APPARENT FINANCIAL STRINGENCY. IT IS VITAL THAT THE PINE PROGRAMME BE CONTINUED IN ORDER THAT WE CAN "TAKE THE HEAT" OFF OUR NATIVE FORESTS AND ALLOW AN ORDERLY PROGRESSION TOWARD THE IDEAL OF A "NORMAL FOREST" WHERE SUSTAINED YIELD IS A REALITY.

THE SECOND PROBLEM AREA IS ENSURING THE STABILITY OF FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THE FACE OF CHANGING PUBLIC ATTITUDES. AFTER ALL, WE HAVE SEEN A CHANGE IN THE SHORT SPACE (FOR US) OF 50 YEARS FROM THE DESIRE TO CLEAR IT ALL FOR AGRICULTURE TO THE DESIRE, BY SOME AT LEAST, TO PRESERVE FROM ANY USE AT ALL. WE HAVE YET TO CONVINCe PEOPLE THAT THE REASONABLE NEEDS OF ALL USERS OF THE FORESTS CAN BE MET BY A COMPREHENSIVE MULTIPLE USE POLICY OF THE KIND WE NOW HAVE.

THE THIRD PROBLEM IS NOT REALLY IN THE FOREST AT ALL, BUT IN THE ADJACENT AGRICULTURAL AREAS AND BECAUSE IT INVOLVES TREES, FORESTERS FEEL AN OBLIGATION TO BECOME INVOLVED.

AFTER ALL, EVERY SINGLE FORESTER CAME INTO THE PROFESSION BECAUSE HE CARED ABOUT TREES. I REFER TO THE NEED TO CONSERVE THE REMAINING TREES IN AGRICULTURAL AREAS AND THE PROMOTION OF TREE PLANTING AS AN AID TO REDUCING WIND EROSION, FOR LIVESTOCK SHELTER AND, IN CERTAIN AREAS, FOR REDUCTION OF STREAM SALINITY. THIS IS A HUGE PROBLEM WHICH WILL REQUIRE THE JOINT EFFORTS OF FORESTERS AND AGRICULTURISTS FOR ANY CHANCE OF SUCCESS. IT SHOULD BE A PRIME FOCUS OF THE STATE CONSERVATION STRATEGY.