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A new way to manage the south-west forests



Conservation
Commission
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

A new way to manage the south-west forests

Background

The State Government is creating a new Forest Management Plan for forests in Western Australia's south-west. Members of the public are invited to make suggestions about the way those forests are managed as part of this Plan.

Western Australia's public forests are vested in the Conservation Commission of Western Australia (Conservation Commission) and managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

Ecologically sustainable forest management affecting the tourism, recreation, mining and wildflower industries, timber production, nature conservation and water catchment protection is vital.

State forests and timber reserves are managed under a Forest Management Plan approved by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage.

The Forest Management Plan for the south-west region expires on 31 December 2003. As part of the Government's Protecting Our Old Growth Forest Policy, the Government wants to move quickly to provide certainty for the future by drawing up a new Plan to be introduced as soon as possible.



Input from the public, scientific and indigenous communities is being gathered now. A Round Table of interest groups has been established, as has a project Steering Committee. Feedback will be incorporated into a draft of the proposed Plan and released for public comment. Submissions for the draft of the proposed Plan will be incorporated into the final draft Plan, where appropriate. Following an appeals period, the final draft of the proposed Plan will be assessed by the Environmental Protection Agency and sent by the Conservation Commission to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage.

Once the Plan has been sent to the Minister and has been approved, it is taken to the Government. Once approved by the Government, it will immediately come into effect.

This brochure outlines the timetable for the creation of the new Plan and gives guidance

about how the public can make submissions. The result should be a level of public participation that is effective, timely and productive.

Who is preparing the new forest management plan?

The Conservation Commission is responsible for preparing and submitting the final draft of the proposed Plan to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage for approval.

The *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* requires the Conservation Commission to develop the plan through the Department of Conservation and Land Management acting jointly with the Forest Products Commission.

The Conservation Commission will co-ordinate public participation and ensure the new Plan incorporates guidelines to assess and audit the Department of Conservation and Land Management's and the Forest

Products Commission's compliance with the new Plan.

To encourage public participation the Conservation Commission has engaged a Public Involvement Co-ordinator. The Co-ordinator is an experienced and independent consultant adopting a 'neutral position' with regard to forest management and conservation issues. The Co-ordinator is responsible for planning and implementing public participation activities to develop the new Plan.

Why do we have public participation?

Public participation allows the Government to:

- accept information and input from the community,
- maintain open communication,
- identify community issues, and

- encourage community awareness about planning processes.

It also allows:

- the joint planning of forest management objectives and strategies,
- the promotion of ecologically sustainable forest management as applied to the whole forest, and
- the development of performance indicators to monitor the implementation of the new Plan.

How can we be involved?

A number of Public Participation tasks have been developed to allow the community and special interest groups to learn more about the project and to be involved in the development of the new Plan.

Public Displays

A series of public displays about the new Plan will be held around the south-west in July and August.

Round Table of interest groups

An independently chaired Round Table Discussion Group has been established to ensure that the wide range of stakeholders is kept informed of the Forest Management Planning process and to provide input to the Conservation Commission's project Steering Committee. The group has representatives from the:

- Western Australian Forest Alliance,
- Conservation Council of Western Australia,
- Wilderness Society,
- Forest Industries Federation of Western Australia,
- Timber Communities Australia,
- Chamber of Minerals and Energy,
- A Local Government Representative,
- South West Regional Tourism Association,
- Australian Workers Union,
- Indigenous Representatives,
- Royal Society of Western Australia, and
- Conservation Commission of Western Australia (Project Steering Committee).



Regional and City Forest Forums

Regional and City Forest Forums will be held in:

- Mundaring,
- Collie,
- Manjimup, and
- Perth.

They will be held to ensure there is a maximum flow of information on specific topics, facilitate discussion, develop conceptual alternatives, learn about impacts and to aim to develop a mutually acceptable consensus on issues.

In most instances the forums will have a series of information presentations, followed by discussion about specific topics. This will allow all attendees to take part in a focussed and structured manner, providing effective outcomes that can be collated and forwarded to the Steering Committee and Round Table Group.

Initial forums will be held before the draft of the proposed Plan is released to allow comments and feedback to be incorporated where appropriate.

A second series of forums will be held after the draft of the proposed Plan is released. This will enable members of the public to raise specific queries and to provide feedback. Information will also be provided about incorporating previous

feedback and comments into the draft of the proposed Plan.

Participation at the forums is open to all members of the public. If you wish to attend a forum, please contact the Public Involvement Co-ordinator who will advise you about venues and dates, and make seating and catering arrangements.

Website

All information produced for public distribution is accessible through the Conservation Commission's website: www.conservation.wa.gov.au, under Forest Management.

Members of the public or groups can use this site to register their interest in the project and raise questions, comments or issues at any time during the public participation process. These issues will be collated with other feedback and presented to the Conservation Commission and Steering Committee by the Public Involvement Co-ordinator.

People or groups who register on the website will receive project information as it becomes available. (Note, groups sent this brochure directly are already registered in the Stakeholder Contacts Database, so there is no need to re-register).

Public notification

Details about the times of public displays and the Regional and City Forest Forums will be advertised in *The West Australian*



and local newspapers. Advertisements coupled with media releases will be made at the time of the release of the draft of the proposed Plan and the final Plan. The availability of these documents will also be advertised in the *Government Gazette*.

Public submissions

Once the draft of the proposed Plan is released, there will be a statutory two-month period during which individuals or groups can make formal submissions.

Copies of the draft of the proposed Plan will be available on the Conservation Commission's website, at Department of Conservation and Land Management offices and

public libraries in the south-west and metropolitan areas, local Government Council offices, the Environmental Protection Authority and the Conservation Commission.

Submissions must be received at the nominated address within the two-month period.

To ensure that issues affecting other government departments are addressed, copies of all submissions are forwarded to the Department of Conservation and Land Management, Forest Products Commission, the Water and River Commission and the Environmental Protection Authority.

Lobby / Interest groups technical seminar

To promote debate and discussion among various interest groups, a seminar will be held to enable representatives of a variety of groups to make a presentation. It is intended that the seminar will be held before the draft of the proposed Plan is released. If successful, additional seminars may be held.

Indigenous groups

The Conservation Commission of WA recognises the unique cultural and historical relationship that Indigenous people have with the land. To ensure meaningful and culturally appropriate involvement of Indigenous groups, the participation strategy will be developed with the assistance of



the Noongar Land Council and other relevant external parties and incorporate input from specialist Indigenous co-ordinators.

An Indigenous Consultation Working Group has been established to assist the Public Involvement Co-ordinator to develop a culturally appropriate involvement strategy.

Public participation process survey

Public feedback on the participation process will be obtained through a Conservation Commission survey. A survey form will be developed with community input. It will assist the Conservation Commission to address consultation process issues and enable public

feedback to be incorporated in the overall public participation strategy. The survey will ascertain the levels of satisfaction with the final Plan approved by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage and independently, the participation process itself.

Feedback from completed survey forms will assist the Steering Committee's evaluation of the effectiveness of public participation and assist the Conservation Commission's endeavours in public participation in future projects.

Will there be feedback on submissions and comments?

Yes. Everyone who submits comments will receive confirmation of the submission. All submissions will be addressed.

Participants from the initial Regional and City Forest Forums will be provided with feedback about the extent to which the draft of the proposed Plan reflects the discussion outcomes of the Forums.

Participants from the second round of Regional and City Forest Forums will similarly be provided with status information of issues raised.

The general public will be also advised of specific decisions on the Conservation Commission Webpage and local and State newspapers.

Public Displays

A series of public displays about creating the new Forest Management Plan will be held around the south-west in July and August.

The displays will be held at:

Town	Venue	Date	Times
Bridgetown	Shire Offices Foyer	Thursday 12th July	10 - 3.30pm
Busselton	Town Library	Friday 13th July	10 - 3.30pm
Margaret River	Outside Dewsons	Saturday 14th July	10 - 3.30pm
Nannup	Main St, next to Post Office	Monday 16th July	10 - 3.30pm
Denmark	Shire Offices Foyer	Tuesday 17th July	10 - 3.30pm
Pemberton	Post Office Foyer	Wednesday 18th July	10 - 3.30pm
Walpole	Walpole Shopping Arcade	Saturday 21st July	10 - 1pm
Albany	Lesser Town Hall	Monday 23rd July	10 - 3.30pm
Northcliffe	Red Cross Hall	Tuesday 24th July	10 - 3.30pm
Manjimup	The Gallery, next to the Library	Thursday 26th July	10 - 3.30pm
Collie	Boulevard Shopping Centre	Friday 27th July	10 - 3.30pm
Dwellingup	Forest Heritage Centre	Saturday 28th July	10 - 3.30pm
Perth City	Alexander Library	Sunday 29th July	10 - 3.30pm
Kalamunda	Kalamunda Village Shopping Centre	Thursday 2nd August	10 - 3.30pm
Bunbury	Centrepont Shopping Centre	Saturday 4th August	10 - 3.30pm
Fremantle	Woolstores Shopping Centre	Sunday 5th August	12 - 3.30pm

The purpose of these displays is to provide information to the general community. The Public Involvement Co-ordinator will be on hand at all displays to provide general project information, maps and contact details for queries, comments and submissions.

Timetable

Below is the timetable for the Public Participation tasks and the new Plan.

The consultation tasks have been scheduled to coincide with appropriate phases of the new Plan's development.

Specific Participation or new FMP Task	Indicative Timeframe
Initial Round Table Group Meeting (Future meetings to be scheduled by the Group)	July 2001
Initial Regional visit by the Public Involvement Co-ordinator	July/August 2001
Initial Regional and City Forest Forums	August/September 2001
Release of the draft FMP for public comment	September/October 2001
Second Round of Regional and City Forest Forums	November 2001
Close of Public Submission Period	December/January 2002
Collation of Submissions and Incorporation into final draft FMP, respond to the EPA	January/February 2002
EPA prepares assessment report on proposed final draft FMP	February/March 2002
Local Government Comment period closes	February/March 2002
Appeal period on EPA assessment report	March/April 2002
Appeals determined and EPA advice to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage	April/May 2002
Conservation Commission submits the proposed new FMP to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage	May/June 2002
Government decision and approval of the new FMP	Mid 2002

The new Plan will come into effect immediately following approval by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage and publication in the *Government Gazette*.

How Can I Get More Information?

Requests for further information or issues can be raised with the Public Involvement Co-ordinator, Marie Hauxby at:

Tel (Metro): (08) 9389 7154

Tel (Country): 1300 65 7154 (local call charge)

Fax: (08) 9389 8603

E-mail: marieh@conservation.wa.gov.au

Website: www.conservation.wa.gov.au

Postal Address: PO Box 3105 Broadway, Nedlands WA 6009



