A forest inventory by farm forestry expert

Terry Carpene, Andrew Rumley and John Terry use calipers and magnifying glasses to count the growth rings from plot bluegums. Photo by Jo Wallace.

by Tammie Reid

LIVING on a hop farm in southern Tasmania, Andrew Rumley was exposed to a lot of anti forestry sentiment.

At the time he thought the solution couldn't be that difficult and so embarked on a career in forestry at the Australian National University, completing an honours project on leaf area index.

No longer that naïve (his own admission!) he is working on a number of inventory projects in native forest, and softwood and hardwood plantations, based in Bunbury's Forest Management Branch. He hopes to graduate from the Department's graduate recruit program this year.

He explains his work since he joined the Department two years ago.

"Our inventory role is to collect and analyse data, mostly measuring trees in the permanent and semi-permanent growth plots established throughout the plantations and forests.

"Aggregated over time, the results enable growth models and yield predictions."

The Bluegum Stem Analysis featured in the photo aims to establish a more reliable estimate of year 10 volumes based on early age measurements.

"It's business information people want yesterday and early growth modelling cannot be done overnight. These models are for the lower rainfall areas east of Collie where measurement history in the past has been limited," Andrew said.

The data collection involves measuring 30 trees per plot and ring counts from five trees per plot. Increment cores are not reliable as bluegum can lay down false growth rings and bias the counting.

The work complements the Department's Science Division research on a site prediction model based on environmental and soil factors. Andrew is using a combination of stand and site characteristics to develop a volume prediction model.

Customers include the Forest Products Commission, private forestry companies and our own forest planners.

"We're moving towards tools and databases that develop customised growth models for specific areas," Andrew said.


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Forest Inventory Story
c/- Tammie Reid

L-R John Terry, Andrew Rumley & Terry Carpene

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Using calipers & magnifying glasses to count the growth rings from sample blueguums

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