



Forest ranger Matt Reynolds (right) on site with one of Ridolfo's machine operators. Photo by Tammie Reid

A delicate balance

THINNING the jarrah forests around Dwellingup can be likened to working among the hairs on a dog's back - so thick and vigorous are the regrowth forests on some of the highest quality sites in the State.

These sites are considered by many to be the jewel in the crown of the State's jarrah forests, and CALM forest officers and harvesting contractors are challenged to work sensitively in such areas.

The following is an example of how teamwork between CALM and the contractors is meeting this challenge:

Thick regrowth forests are marked for thinning by CALM forest officers, while contractors harvest timber suitable for poles, sawlogs, firewood and chips, leaving selected crop trees.

CALM tree markers have to work quickly to stay ahead of the contractors carrying out the thinning operations.

by Tammie Reid

Trees are marked for retention for their future timber potential, habitat value, or as permanent exclusion zones of high conservation or visual resource value.

All operations are done under 'no soil movement' conditions and are confined to micro catchments to limit or prevent the spread of dieback.

Meanwhile, follow-up work, such as pulling all logging debris away from the base of the retained trees, is carried out.

The trick for the harvesting contractor is to manoeuvre big machinery through the forest, fell the timber and transport it, without damaging forest set aside for conservation, or for future logging.

V & D Ridolfo, a south west timber harvesting company, works closely with CALM Dwellingup's forest officers.

There is a healthy respect between CALM's

forest officer in charge of the operation Matt Reynolds and Ridolfo's bush boss John Ditoro and his crew.

"Ridolfo's have a couple of excellent tree fellers and very competent machinery operators - all accredited with Forest Industries Training Service (FITS).

"It may surprise some to learn that these crew members are dedicated to minimising their impact on the bush, and they're a great example to other forest operators.

"The contractor uses machinery that's slightly smaller than that of most logging contractors, and therefore more manoeuvrable in thick regrowth forests.

"The end result is excellent, with very little, if any, damage.

"Effective communication and respect between both parties is what brings about the success of such a delicate operation; it's a good way to work," says Matt.



Colleen



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