

## River Red Gum Forests: Contemporary Forest Management Practices (NSW)

### From the Management Plan for the Murrumbidgee Management Area (NSW State Forests)

#### Management Objectives:

- To maintain the ecological viability of the natural Red Gum floodplain ecosystems.
- To maintain the area generally under forest vegetation so as to:
  - Conserve soil and water values.
  - Maintain a diversity of habitat suitable for the maintenance of wildlife, particularly waterfowl.
  - Maintain the floodplain as a breeding ground for native fish.
  - Provide a flood buffer area. (Forests allow flood waters to infiltrate the soil and reduce the size of the flood.)
  - To supply sawlogs to industry at a rate designed to sustain a yield suitable with the productive capacity of the area and consistent with the above objectives.
  - To supply other timber and forest products.
  - To provide for the appropriate use by the public for recreation and education.
  - To provide for grazing, apiculture and other forest uses.
  - To maintain any rare or significant ecological, historical, floral, faunal or other scientific or cultural values.
  - To maximise net financial returns from the forest.

State Forests are subdivided into *Compartments* usually between 200 and 500 ha in area. *Compartments* are used for recording logging events, yields, floods, grazing etc. Compartments are a tool to assist management, similar to a farmer having paddocks.

#### Plan for Timber Management (Murrumbidgee Management Area)

- The yield of River Red Gum sawlogs shall be limited to an average of 8 000m<sup>3</sup> per year.
- The yield of small logs (thinnings - < 40 cm dia) shall be limited to 5 000m<sup>3</sup> per year.
- No tree larger than 170 cm dia shall be felled specifically for wood production.
- At least one and up to 5 suitable, mature trees with nesting hollows shall be retained per hectare for wildlife habitat. All such trees within 20 m of any stream, 10 m of lagoons and 60 m of the Murrumbidgee River shall be retained.
- Trees showing signs of Aboriginal markings shall be retained, recorded and protected.
- Trees identified as nesting trees of endangered fauna, specifically the Superb parrot, shall be retained and protected.

#### There are also separate Management Plans for:

Recreation Use	Grazing	Apiculture (bees)
Historic & Aboriginal Sites	Fire protection	Research

#### Berry Jerry State Forest (Wagga Wagga)

Berry Jerry is included in the Management Plan for the Murrumbidgee Management Area. It was dedicated as a State Forest in 1915 with a total area of 1 334 ha. The present forest "structure" is the result of land management practices used by the Aborigines and European settlement.

Harvesting operations are monitored to ensure they comply with the Forest Practices Code and the Harvesting Plan for that area. Operations conform to various legislative requirements including the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, Threatened Species Act and Heritage and Soil Conservation legislation. Trees for cutting are marked by State Forests and the operation is conducted by licensees. Regular burning by Aboriginal people helped keep the under storey open and hindered sapling growth. Red gums are very sensitive to fire.

## **Australia's National Forest Policy**

The policy of 1992 sets out broad conservation and industry goals for the management of Australia's forests agreed between Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.

To implement this national policy, Governments have opted for an approach which involves:

- providing interim protection to forest areas which may be required for a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CRA) forest reserve system;
- undertaking Comprehensive Regional Assessments (CRAs) of environment, heritage, economic and social values of forests;

negotiating Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) between the Commonwealth and State Governments about the long term management and use of forests in a particular region.

## **Ramsar**

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance was the first modern inter-governmental treaty between nations aiming to conserve natural resources. The signing of the Convention took place in 1971 in the small Iranian town of Ramsar (since then, it has taken the common name of the Ramsar Convention). Australia was the first nation to become a Contracting Party to the Convention.

The Convention's broad aims are to halt the world-wide loss of wetlands and to conserve, through wise use and management, those that remain. This requires international co-operation, policy making, capacity building and technology transfer.

## **Barmah Forest, Ramsar Site 14**

The Barmah Forest consists of the section of the Murray River floodplain within Victoria (i.e. south of the main river channel) between the downstream end of the Ulupna Island and Barmah Township. The area includes the Barmah State Park, which was proclaimed in 1987, and the Barmah State Forest. It is an area of River Red Gum forest, subject to periodic inundation. The forest features a variety of permanent and temporary wetlands, including lakes, swamps, lagoons and flooded forest. These wetlands provide habitat for a large number of bird species.