

Minutes of South Sister meeting Forestry and Residents of St Marys

Meeting held at Escape Café, St Marys 12 noon, Thursday August 12, 2004

Present:

Forestry : Steve Manson (District Manager Bass), Paul Rosevear (Coordinator, Planning, Bass District), Andrew Crowden (Planner, Bass District), Jo Field (Community Liaison Officer, Bass District)

Community Representatives:

Charles Trollope, Frank Giles, Rod Baker, Todd Dudley, Frances Daily, Isabel Witton, Melanie Casey, Souen Sok

Frances gave a brief introduction emphasising that logging at South Sister was opposed by a broad cross section of the local community. She suggested that there be a public meeting in the future.

Steve Manson:

- Initial purpose of the meeting with Frances was to explain the Planning process associated with the Forest Practice Plan (FPP).
- The FPP for South Sister is not yet finalised but should be within the next 2 months.
- The coupe is not a high priority – it is a “back up coupe”.
- Road “upgrading” is scheduled for later this year but might be next year

Andrew Crowden briefly explained how values are assessed for coupes.

Paul Rosevear explained the process:

- Forestry has a three year plan which is reassessed and updated each year.
- Coupes are chosen to meet targets for a mix of different products required.
- Logging coupes are dispersed to reduce impact
- Intended to build road to this coupe last year – intend roading to start in November.
- Road will be upgraded
- This coupe is a relatively high yield sawlog coupe (20%) for North East Tasmania
- FPP is a form of Environmental audit/management plan

Andrew :

- Contacts experts if he thinks the coupe requires additional surveys
- Domestic water intakes/use of water is the only issue not yet resolved as yet.
- FPP describes how logging will be carried out
- Rod Baker supplied a copy of letter from Steven Mansons guaranteeing no logging/roadworks in 2004.

Steve:

Guaranteed that no roadworks will begin in 2004

Frances outlined concerns

Flora and Fauna:

- Eucalyptus brookeriana forest
- Euphrasia collina deflexifolia
- Peter M'Quillan's report
- Velvet worms, Goshawk, Quolls

Water:

- Disturbance will lead to loss of water quantity impacting on farmers, tourists, residents (domestic use, hydro generation)
- Residents of Germantown have been using water from the South Sister for 100 years
- Chemicals may impact of water quality and certified organic farm
- Water/rainfall is being measured by local residents

Air Quality

- Concerns re burn offs, smoke

Steepness of coupe

- landslip issues

Illegal access through E. brookeriana forest.

- What is Forestry doing about it?

Tourism:

- South Sister is a local icon widely used with great views. It is used extensively for bush walking, rock climbing, horse riding
- Visual Impact
Effects of logging will be seen from afar

Access

- No access during logging
- Road safety is a concern

Health Issues

- Water
- Air
- Noise (loss of sleep)
- Stress
- traffic accidents (steep, narrow road)

Employment

- Agricultural use – loss of water supply may be an issue leading to reduction in employment
- Tourism – loss of icon. No local benefit from logging operation

Melanie asked what the significance of a back up coupe was and whether less significant coupes be substituted.

Steve:

Coupe will be logged at some time. Forestry are required to meet contracts to McKays, Gunns etc;. It is not negotiable. The forestry industry is not woodchip based.

Todd:

Brought up Halls Falls where a production coupe was reserved for protection/tourism. Also soups of up to 98% woodchip obviously not viable if sawlog is the bases of industry

Steve:

RFA was process for community input. This coupe is production forest. South Sister peak is informal reserve

Andrew:

Consults Conserve report to help assess habitat values on coupe. Gets expert advice and prescriptions where necessary.

Frank:

Bob Mesibov (velvet work expert) is not independent. Tribunal decision Denny property refused logging because of impact on velvet work. Mesibov is expert for Gunn's case

Paul:

Maybe no burning or only burning of heads/spot burning because of velvet worms.

Andrew:

- No habitat for goshawks (Balckwood gullies)
- Spotted tailed quoll, streamside reserves, habitat strips/clumps adequate to protect habitat
- Brookeriana area – road upgrade will not widen road
- Euphrasia – plants like disturbance; present species will be damaged/destroyed

Insects:

- McQuillan report will be forwarded to Forestry

Water:

Steve: All domestic intakes are yet to be mapped but there will be no loss from logging

Frances:

Has any research been done on effects to water pre and post logging?

Steve:

Yes and he will forward the results

Melanie: not confident buffer zones will protect water supplies

Steve:

- Report from Peter McIntosh addressed water and geological issues
- David Leaman's report is "not scientific or factual". Denied any impact from Forestry on water supplies/quantity.
- The coupe will be selectively logged. No chemicals will be used. No 1080 unless shooting is ineffective.
- Tourism
- There will be minimal impact on views from distance and from lookout.
- The Forestry will not legalise the road which has been put through the Brookeriana reserve. The area will have to be rehabilitated i.e. won't be able to be used as a road.

Andrew has taken photos from various points

Frank :

1000 tourists to Seaview walk up South sister per year

Paul:

Water will increase after logging

Steve:

Regeneration will be good

Discussion then became fragmented and covered various issues.

Frances

- Summarised meeting – asked for written confirmation that no chemicals would be used, research information regarding pre and post logging water levels would be forwarded; briefing with local group when FPP complete
- Thanked Forestry for coming and mentioned public meeting. Requested their presence at the meeting however they preferred to have a small group to brief when FPP finished.
- Re-inforced that we didn't want any logging.

Meeting closed at 1410 hours