

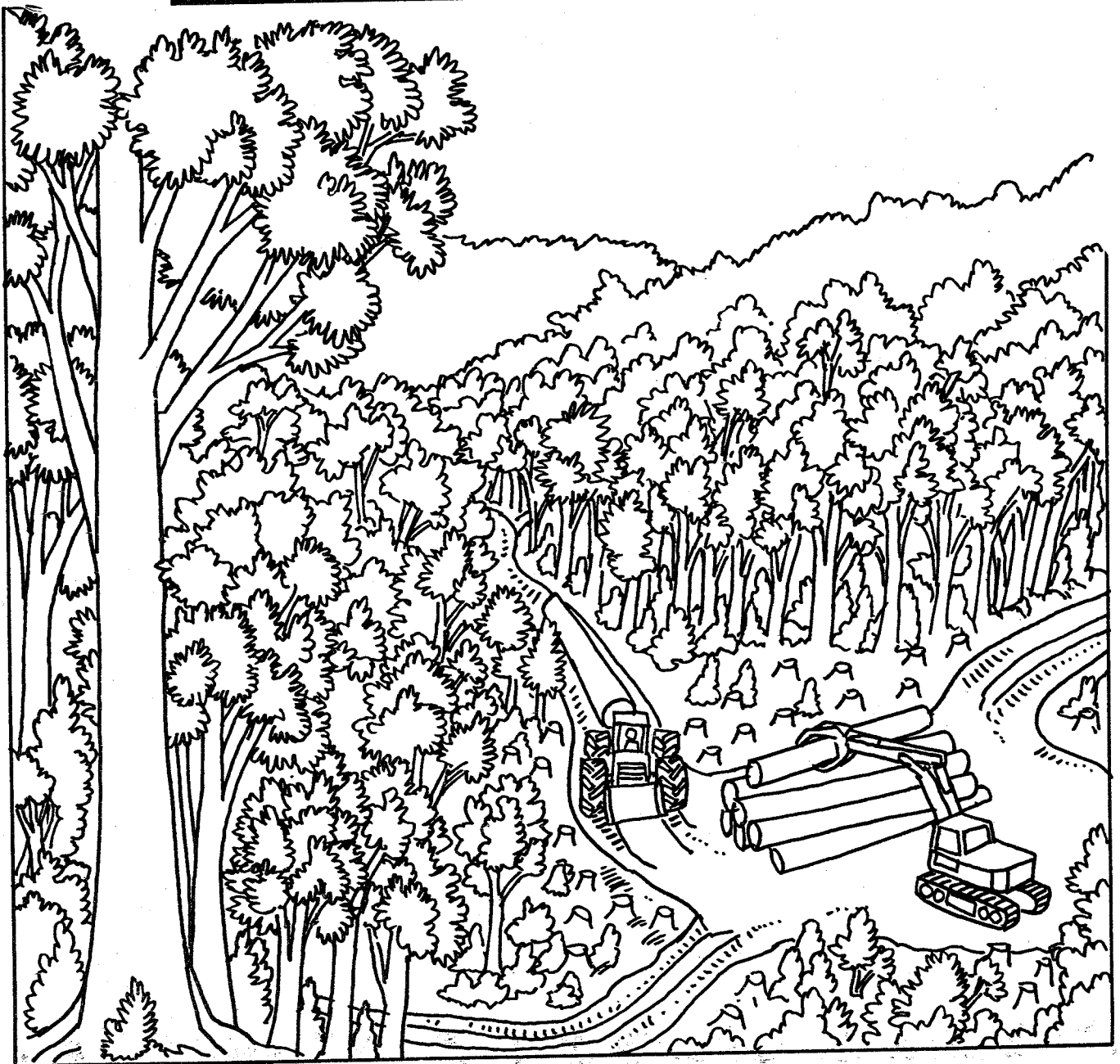
Box 4



ANNUAL REPORT

1988-89

FOREST PRACTICES UNIT



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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

There have been considerable improvements in Forest Practices throughout the year. The efforts of industry and Commission staff, contractors and operators in the first 18 months of operation of the Forest Practices legislation has been generally commendable.

Review of the Forest Practices Code

After one year's operation, submissions for the review of the Forest Practices Code were called in November 1988. Some 46 submissions were received. An amended draft Code based on these submissions, experience gained and research findings was issued in July '89 for further public input.

Three Year Plans

Production of the first Three Year Plan provided a comprehensive picture of the logging operations and the transport routes taken of wood produced on private property and Crown land in the state. Copies were sent to all relevant Councils and meetings held with Councils. The continuous *ad hoc* transfer of State forest to other land uses makes planning difficult.

Forest Practices Officers

Twenty-four Forest Practices Officers were trained and appointed by the Commission from forest industry and Commission staff.

Timber Harvesting Plans

Some 770 Timber Harvesting Plans were approved by Forest Practices Officers in 88/89 on private property and State forest.

A Guide to Preparing Timber Harvesting Plans was prepared, printed and widely distributed.

Resource Manuals

Resource manuals are being finalised by specialist staff in flora, fauna, archaeology and geomorphology. The manuals explain the prescriptions of the Forest Practices Code and assist Forest Practices Officers and planners in applying the Code in the field.

Specialists (Fauna, Flora, Archaeology, Geomorphology)

The work programme of the specialists aims to have about 50 per cent of time spent on Forest Practices direct and 50 per cent on Forest Practices related research. The research is directed by the TFRC.

The forest industry, through F.I.A.T., has continued to fund the research component of the specialists, through the TFRC, the remainder being funded by the Forestry Commission.

Additionally, a number of forest practices related research projects have been funded by the National Estate Grants Programme, the National Soil Conservation and the Australian N.P.W.S.

The specialist section in the amended Forest Practices Code were expanded substantially.

Monitoring

A major survey of application of forest practices was completed by four senior technical field staff covering a sample of about 15 per cent of all operations on Crown lands and private property.

SUMMARY OF MAIN ASPECTS REQUIRING ATTENTION

Forest Practices

Wet weather logging: Lack of suitable winter areas and hence difficulty of adhering to the Forest Practices Code during prolonged wet periods in some of the wet areas of the state may require lengthy winter closures of industry in these areas unless large scale stockpiling or other measures are introduced. The problem is aggravated state-wide by the continuous transfer of production forests to other uses.

Use of green roads: In some cases insufficient time has been allowed between construction and carting causing excessive rutting and turbid water run-off.

Forest practices standards of some small independent sawmillers and contractors still need to be considerably raised. The large increase in commercial fire wood cutting (not covered by the Forest Practices Act) causes major problems in some areas. Proper reforestation is also a problem in some of these areas.

Streamside reserves in cable logging.

The integration, particularly in wet forests, of safe burning boundaries and the prescribed retention of streamside resources, animal habitat areas and other forest practices.

Administration

Some Municipal Councils believe that the level of consultation taking place between Forest Practices Officer's and Council staff at time of Timber Harvesting Plan preparation or approval has been insufficient in the past. Other Councils believe sufficient consultation is taking place.

There is still a lack of defined responsibility for approving and particularly inspecting of *'independent' private property operations*.

The anomalous situation exists that forest activities are subject to a Forest Practices Code but subsequent *agricultural clearing* (e.g. of streamside reserves) generally does not appear to be subject to similar restrictions.

A simplification of *procedures for approving very small low impact timber harvesting operations* on private property needs to be considered to reduce costs to the landowner.

Training of field operators needs to be further addressed by industry.

ANNUAL REPORT 88/89: DETAILS

1. Forest Practices Legislation

There were no new amendments or regulations.

Legal advice obtained clarified the relative powers of the Forest Practices Act and the Local Government Act. Local Government is not in a position to require planning approvals for forest operations subject to an approved Timber Harvesting Plan. (But consultation needs to take place and has been stressed to all Forest Practices Officers).

2. Private Timber Reserves

Dealt with by the Private Forestry Division.

3. Timber Harvesting Plans

3.1 The Act requires that, with minor exceptions, all commercial timber harvesting operations on private property and Crown land are subject to an approved Timber Harvesting Plan. The Timber Harvesting Plan lists how an operation should be carried out in accordance with the Forest Practices Code. Harvesting includes roading, logging and reforestation where applicable.

3.2 Statistics

Timber Harvesting Plans approved in 88/89							
	Roads Only	Hardwood		Softwoods		Total	%
		PP	CL	PP	CL		
By industry FPO's	38	227	21	31	-	317	41
By FC FPO's	36	72	215	6	78	407	53
By Consulting FPO's	-	47	-	1	-	48	6
TOTAL	74	346	236	38	78	772	100
per cent	10	45	30	5	10	100	

Percentage of Operations by Type and Future Landuse (Hardwoods only)

	Clearfelling for sown regeneration	Clearfelling for plantation	Clearfelling for agriculture	Non. Clearfelling *1	Total
Crown lands	55%	12%	-	32%	100
Private property	7%	30%	30%	33%	100

(*1 regrowth retention, shelterwood, selective logging etc)

3.3 Implementation

Considerable progress was made during this first full year of operation of the Forest Practices Act. However, aspects requiring attention are:

Input in preparation:

- It appears contractor input could still be improved in some cases.
- Familiarity with Forest Practices Code requirements by operators could be improved generally.
- Some Municipal Councils believe the present level of consultation between Forest Practices Officers and Council staff at time of Timber Harvesting Plan preparation and approval is insufficient.
- The constantly increasing pressure of work on Commission and industry staff, contractor and operators is acknowledged. But adequate input by all parties is necessary if forest practices are to be further improved.

Standards:

- Generally good for plans prepared by consultants, Forestry Commission and industry staff. Wording needs to be more unambiguous and precise at times.

Approval and Inspection:

The lack of clear responsibility for approving and particularly inspecting of independent private property operations not supplying pulpwood to pulpwood companies (with Forest Practices Officers on their staff) remains a problem.

The number and volumes of these operations are at present likely to be less than 10 per cent of the total cut, but they appear to have a disproportionate impact due to their generally close proximity to centres of population, the lack of training and appreciation of requirements by some independent operators and at times the lack of suitable equipment available to the operators.

4. Three Year Plans

The Forest Practices Act 1985 provides for the production of three year plans for private property operations showing their location and carting routes of the timber produced. Such plans are to be produced by companies harvesting or causing to be harvested more than 100 000t in the previous year. Hence, all operations from which pulpwood is supplied to these companies should appear on the three year plan. This should be of the order of 90 per cent of all logging operations on private property and State forest.

By collating the private property cut and carting routes with those on State forest, a comprehensive picture of logging operations in the state can be obtained.

Three year plans were produced for the first time in 88/89 by the relevant companies and collated by the Commission. Computer maps showing location of the operation and printouts showing volumes and carting routes were sent to all relevant Councils.

Councils were invited to meetings in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie to discuss the three year plans. Attendance was generally poor. Procedures will need to be reviewed.

The uncertainty caused by the continuing transfer of State forest to other land uses has made forward planning difficult, hence reducing the value of the plans. Accurate non-company private property logging forecasts are also difficult.

5. Forest Practices Code

5.1 Baseline Survey

A survey covering a sample of some 15 per cent of Timber Harvesting Plans was carried out by Forestry Commission senior technical field staff. Results are being analysed.

5.2 Main Aspects Requiring Attention

While considerable progress has been made, some matters require further attention e.g.:

- Adhering to the Code in prolonged wet periods in some of the wetter parts of the state with few suitable winter areas available.
- Continuous transfer of State forests to other preservation land uses makes implementation of the Forest Practices Code on remaining areas much more difficult. The transfers have had considerable impact on the availability of suitable wet weather areas.
- Problems of poor equipment, attitude and lack of training of some small independent contractors and sawmillers on private property.
- In some areas commercial firewood operators (not covered by the Forest Practices Act) cause considerable problems.
- The sometimes insufficient consolidation of roads before being used for carting, resulting in excessive rutting and runoff of turbid or muddy water.
- Lack of a basic code of agricultural (or mining) practices ensuring protection of streamside reserves once timber harvesting is completed.
- Regeneration difficulties in some of the more marginal private property areas being logged and poor regeneration results in a number of small private property operations.
- The striking of a reasonable balance between the economics and reduced soil impact of cable logging and the need to retain streamside vegetation.
- The continuing push for more intensive utilisation resulting in more soil compaction and disturbance.
- The striking of a reasonable balance between safe burning boundaries and other forest practices requirements.

5.3 Review

The Forest Practices Act makes provisions for the review of the Forest Practices Code. The Code was to be reviewed one year after its inception. Submissions were called in late 1988. Following receipt of some 46 submissions, practical experience gained since the first Forest Practices Code was introduced, and research done, a draft amended Code was issued in July '89.

The main proposed amendments provide for:

- Improved soil protection of more erodible soils, of steeper areas to be converted to plantations and of wet weather logging areas.
- Hence improved maintenance of long term site productivity and water quality.
- More consultation with Municipal Councils particularly in relation to harvesting in water supply catchments.
- More emphasis on the integration of trees into farm management.
- More appropriate management of streamside reserves on flatter areas with soil of low erodibility.
- A more comprehensive approach to cable logging, plantation reforestation and fire management.
- Improved integration of forest archaeology, geomorphology and flora and fauna protection with production forestry.

An amended Code will be issued early in 1990.

6. Forest Practices Tribunal

Mr. D. Huett moved interstate and resigned during the year. A replacement is being sought. There were no appeals to the Tribunal in 88/89.

7. Staff

7.1 Forest Practices Officers

Twenty-four Forest Practices Officers were trained and appointed under Seal of the Forestry Commission during the year. Three Forest Practices Officers resigned and took up other work. Category and source of Forest Practices Officers as at 31/6/89 are shown on the next page. The generally excellent work done by Forest Practices Officers during the year has been greatly appreciated.

	As at 30.6.88	Left/ Retired	Changes from FPO (insp.) to FPO(plan)	New Appoint.	As at 30.6.89	%
FPO(Planning)						
- Industry	19	-1	+1	5	24	17
- FC	27	-	+1	8	36	26
- Independent Consultants	5	-	-	-	5	4
	51	-1	+2	13	65	47
FPO(Inspecting)						
- Industry	28	-1	-1	5	33	24
- FC	35	-1	-1	6	39	29
- Independent Consultants	-	-	-	-	-	-
	64	-1	-2	11	71	53
TOTAL (per cent)	115	-3	0	24	136	100

Resignations: A. Cole (Forest Resources), M. Falkiner (ANM), R. Thomas (FC).
Two Consulting Forest Practices Officer (Planning) did not approve any plans in 88/89.

7.2 Forest Practices Unit Staff

as at 31/6/89.

Bert Witte	BSc (For), Dip.For., Chief Forest Practices Officer
Paul Wilkinson	B.Nat.Res., Environmental Officer
Sheryl Wolfe	Clerk/Typist, Registrar for the Forest Practices Tribunal
Ross Andrewartha	Sen. Tech. Forester (temporary)
Dr. Kevin Kiernan	PhD Geomorphology, Geomorphologist
Fred Duncan	BSc, Botanist
Anne McConnell	BSc MA, Archaeologist
Dr. Robert Taylor	PhD Zoology, Zoologist

8. Training, Education

8.1 Forest Practices Officers

The prerequisite qualification of Forest Practices Officers ensure a good forestry background. In addition newly appointed FPO's attended a training course consisting of a number of formal teaching sessions, field trips and practical exercises in various parts of the state. Five training sessions of two to three days duration were held, attended by twenty four industry and Forestry Commission staff and one sawmiller. The T.F.I.T.C. organised the administrative side of the course.

Additional training sessions have been organised by the Forest Practices Specialists.

8.2 Contractors

A number of meetings with contractors organised by the pulpwood companies were attended.

Training of contractors is considered a responsibility of the companies 'controlling' these contractors. Intensity of training has varied between companies. Most training and education probably occurs when discussions take place between Forest Practices Officers, supervisors and contractors on Timber Harvesting Plans and operations in progress.

A problem exists with 'independent' contractors, particularly the small contractors harvesting sawlog only as contact between Commission and company Forest Practices Officers ^{as well} ~~and~~ as independent operators is generally limited.

8.3 Processors

The responsibility for seeing that conditions of a Timber Harvesting Plan are adhered to rests with processors as well as contractors. Hence both should know what Forest Practices is about.

The bulk of timber harvested in the state is logged by or supplied to the pulpwood/chipwood companies with trained Forest Practices Officers on their staff. These companies are thus well aware of requirements.

'Independent' sawmillers (not financially linked to pulpwood companies) do not have Forest Practices Officers on their staff (with one exception) and most of their training and education has been provided informally during Timber Harvesting Plan preparations and approval.

Some districts have run field days to which company staff, contractors and operators are invited.

8.4 Operators

The T.F.I.T.C. is proposing to include forest practices training as part of the timber worker certification course.

A summary of the main points in the Code relevant to operators was prepared by the Chief Forest Practices Officer for distribution to operators via the A.T.W.U.

8.5 Other

External Meetings

Councils	4 Council meetings addressed
Unions	ATWU
FIAT Forest Practices Committee	3 meetings held
Private Forestry Council	attended 2 meetings
T.R.M.P.A.	1 day with planning officers
Aboriginal Centre	with Archaeologist

Solicitor General	clarifying powers of Forest Practices Act
Town & Country Planning Comm.	ditto
Municipal Assoc. staff	ditto
C.S.I.R.O.	field day on forest practices application

Close liaison exists between relevant Government departments, Heritage Commission, University, Tasmanian Museum etc and specialists.

Lectures were given to students at the Devonport Technical College.

External visitors on forest practices implementation.

David West	Queensland (Forestry Dept.)
John Galbraith	New Zealand (L.I.R.A.)
Ray Leivers	Victoria (C.F.L.)
Tony Manderson	" "
Bob Orr	" "
Don Thomson	" "
Mike Leonard	" "

9. Standards

9.1 Field Visits

During the year a considerable number of requests were received for interpretation of the Code. Some 53 visits to various operations in the state were made by the Chief Forest Practices Officer and/or Environmental Officer as per table below.

88/89 Forest Practices Visits

Districts	H'wd	Pine	Roads Quarries	Total
Smithton	3			3
Burnie	2			2
Devonport	1	1		2
Launceston	3		1	4
Deloraine	3			3
Scottsdale			-	
Fingal	3	3		6
Triabunna	2			2
Norfolk	2			2
Geeveston	2			2
Queenstown	-			-
Roads & Quarries	2	2		
ANM SF	2			2
TOTAL SF	23	4	3	30
APM	-			-
TPFH PP	2			2
APPM PP	3		1	4
Forest Resources PP	4			4
AFH PP	2	1		3
M.Chin PP	1			1
Independent Operators				
Devonport	1			1
Launceston	4			4
Norfolk	3			3
Deloraine	1			1
TOTAL PP	21	1	1	23
GRAND TOTAL	44	5	4	53

9.2 Baseline Survey

A comprehensive survey was carried by Senior Technical Forestry Commission staff seconded from the regions. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. A sample of some 15 per cent of operations on State forests and private property were covered statewide. Results are not to hand as yet.

9.3 Investigation of Complaints

Complaints from adjoining landowners or the public were received and investigated where necessary.

- Three on water quality (domestic & town)
- Two on scenic (along major tourist routes, skylines)
- Two on soil erosion (plantation establishment)
- Two on deterioration of roads (preventing access to private property blocks)
- One on spillage of oil
- One on excessive restoration of access tracks (preventing access)
- One on access on highway and mud on highway
- One on streamside reserve encroachment (two were related to agricultural clearing)
- One on 1080

Most complaints related to small 'independent' operations on private property..

Prosecutions were considered in four cases but following a detailed review of the evidence they were not proceeded with.

10. Specialists

10.1 Forest Practices

The following field visits by specialist staff to deal with specific forest practices aspects, problems, or requests for assistance or surveys were made.

To Crown land, industry freehold
or other Private Prop.

Archaeology	19
Zoology	15
Geomorphology	11
Botany	64
TOTAL	109

10.2 Training

Training input was provided at the:

- Forest Practices Training Course (FC & Industry staff)
- Devonport TAFE Training Course (FC & Industry staff)
- Regional or District field or office days with industry participation
- Seminar on Archaeology & Land Management (FC & Industry staff)
- Three day Botany course for Technical Foresters (FC & Industry staff)
- Workshop on Wildlife Corridors (FC & Industry staff)

10.2 Resource Manuals

The Forest Practices Code sets out the principles and basic approaches to forest practices. The Resource Manuals provide background and further details to aid Forest Practices Officers and other planning staff. The Manuals are in various stages of completion.

Zoology:	Final field comments received and ready for printing
Geomorphology:	Out in field for comments
Archaeology:	About to go out for comments
Botany:	Being typed

A Soils Resource Manual is also in preparation (Div. of Silviculture: Graeme Brown).

10.3 Other

Input in Management Plans and Working Plans for State forests was provided. The Forest Practices Code was reviewed.

10.4 Research

Although nominally the work of the specialists is divided about 50:50 between Forest Practices and Research, work in 88/89 has been weighted towards Forest Practices. Research work is being supervised by the TFRC and the Division of Silviculture - see also that Division's Annual Report.

The following Forest Practices related research projects are in progress or have been completed.

Forest Practices Specialists:

Botany		Funding
Effects of logging practices on Central Plateau forests	Fred Duncan	FC/Industry
Predictive modelling of rare species	" "	" "
* Dry sclerophyll reservation assessment	Kristen Williams	FC
 Archaeology		
* Eastern Tasmanian Sandstone Shelter Project (Aboriginal shelters)	Betty Ross	Industry/TFRC
* Historic Inventory Project (compiling a list of all known historic sites in wood production forests)		N. Estate Grants
* Temma chert survey	Ian Thomas	FC
* Teepookana Aboriginal & Historic Site Survey	David Bannear	DLPW/FC
 Zoology		
* The Value of Wildlife Corridors in Production Forests	Peter Cale	Industry/TFRC/FC
 Geomorphology		
* Impact of logging on limestone caves	Mark Burrows	Aust. NPWS
Karst Groundwater movements	Kevin Kiernan	FC/Industry
Landslip Studies	" "	"
Documentation of Karst Resources and compilation of Tasmanian Karst Atlas	" "	"

(* Supervised by Specialists)

Division of Silviculture

Soils, hydrology		
Minimum impact logging systems on forest erosion	Ron King	Govt, Industry
Effects of mechanised forest operations on site productivity and soil degrade	John Williams	TFRC/NSCP
Assessment of forest erosion vulnerability (developing guidelines for operations on highly erodible soils)	Graeme Brown	FC/Industry/NSCP

11. Publications

A Guide to Preparing Timber Harvesting Plans

12. Finance

Expenditure for the year:

Forestry Commission	241 909
Forest Industry contribution to specialists	103 319
	\$ 345 228
TOTAL	\$ 345 228