

# **2005 Softwood Project**

**Australian Forestry Management Pty Limited (AFM)**



**Forests NSW Annual Report**

**Financial Year 2009-2010**

## Legal Context

This annual report has been prepared in accordance with Schedule 1 Part 3(h) of the Forestry Management Contract between Australian Forestry Management Pty Limited and the Forestry Commission of New South Wales (Forests NSW) for the 2005 Softwood Project.

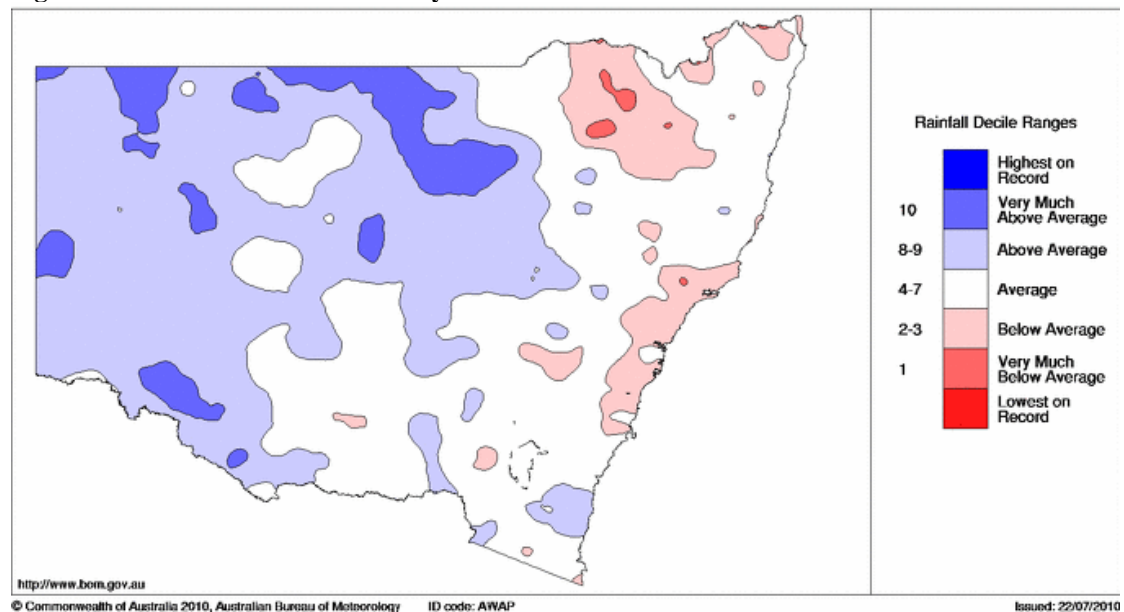
## Overview

The 2005 Softwood Project comprises seven 2006 age class plantations blocks. All of the plantation blocks are located within the Hume Region near Tumut or Tumbarumba with the exception of Mingary Vale, which is located within Macquarie Region near Oberon.

Rainfall in Hume Region has been near average during the reporting period (refer figure 1). Total rainfall at Tumbarumba from July 09 to June 10 was 887mm compared to the long term average of 981mm. Total rainfall for Yass from July 09 to June 10 was 721mm compared to the long term average of 590mm.

In Macquarie Region the annual rainfall was below average (744mm) and quite variable on a month to month basis). The spring was drier than average but the summer was wetter with above average rainfall in December, February and March.

**Figure 1: NSW Rainfall deciles 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010**



The condition of the plantations is generally good with some localised exceptions at Parkers, Ruby Creek and Mingary Vale where there are areas of low stocking. The low stocking areas are predominantly a legacy of the drought and pest issues.

Ongoing pest control remains a priority with some localised damage incurred in the majority of plantations. Restocking of small patches is being undertaken during winter 2010.

## **Stand Condition**

The plantations are generally in good condition. Exceptions to this exist in sections of Parkers, Ruby Creek and Mingary Vale.

### *Maragle Park*

Satisfactory stocking, very good condition and growth.

#### **Maragle Park 2006 AC – July 2010**



### *Paddys River*

Satisfactory stocking but growth has been below average due to the drought. Trees have however established site dominance and growth has recently improved (no photo available).

### *Parkers*

Variable condition and growth. Stocking remains low following the drought in approximately 20% of the plantation (as detailed in previous reports) including some areas that are unstocked. Some localised areas of wind damage detailed in the 2008-09 annual report are now less evident.

#### **Parkers 2006 AC July 2010**



### *Ruby Creek*

Stocking is mostly adequate but variable, estimated to range from 600 to 800 stems per hectare. Trees replanted in 2007 are growing very slowly and appear to be affected by the past drought conditions and the cold temperatures experienced at this site.

There are some areas, estimated to be about 25 hectares in extent, where stocking levels are low or very low. These areas are rocky and/or have been subject to very heavy bracken competition, which was not practical to control post establishment. A proportion of this has been severely affected by trampling and grazing damage from wild horses.

### **Ruby Creek 06 AC – July 2010 –**



### *The Valley*

The Valley property is mostly reasonably well stocked and has acceptable tree growth. Where significant replanting has occurred in 2007 and 2008, the trees are smaller but are currently growing well.

There are localised areas surrounding drainage lines which are unstocked due to frost killing the trees. Minor, localised wind toppling has been observed, however the trees are stabilising as they continue to grow. As previously reported, there is an area of about 5 hectares in Compartment 2007 where ongoing browse damage has reduced stocking to low levels.

The basin area of The Valley, previously reported as being affected by frost damage, has improved in condition with reasonable tree growth now evident. This area has three to five hectares of low stocking, due to frost mortality. Due to the small scale no remedial action is recommended.



**Valley 2006 AC – July 2010**



*Mingary Vale (Transgrid)*

The stand is in generally good condition. There are some sections performing poorly as a result of competition with bracken and acacia as well isolated areas of heavy grazing by kangaroos and wallabies. Discussions with Agriwealth will continue on the appropriate management of affected areas.

**Mingary Vale 2006 AC – Good growth and vigour**



**Mingary Vale 2006 AC – Bracken Infestation – small isolated pockets are still competing with Bracken and heavy grazing by kangaroos and wallabies.**



*Vans*

Good condition and growth and acceptable stocking.

**Vans 2006 AC – stand condition and growth (photo July 2010)**



## **Pest and Disease Information**

Feral pig trapping and poisoning continued during the report period on properties where pig populations were present. Pest damage was noted during the report period in the majority of plantations, including some stem damage caused by rabbits, wallabies, wild deer, straying livestock and brumbies, excluding Parker's where native animal was the cause of damage on smaller replant trees.

Deer hunting by selected members of the Australian Deer Association has been authorised on properties where deer populations are likely to cause excessive tree damage.

Wild horses at Ruby Creek have damaged about 10 hectares of plantation. The horses continue to periodically return to the plantation and require control to prevent further trampling damage. FNSW is currently implementing a wild horse removal program. FNSW is mindful that the local and general community remain sensitive to this issue.

## **Activities undertaken**

Activities completed during 2009/10 included;

- Woody weed control, Paddy's River and Ruby Vale.
- Pest animal control
- Maintenance of tracks and access roads
- Fire risk reduction works and surveillance
- Periodic grazing (Van's) to reduce the fire hazard.

## **Fire Incidents**

There were no fire incidents within or in close proximity to the plantations.

## **Activities Planned for 2010/2011**

- Pest animal control, including removal of wild horses at Ruby Creek.
- Maintenance of tracks and access roads
- Fire risk reduction works and surveillance
- Introduction of grazing where it is assessed that there will be minimal tree damage, particularly Maragle Park and Mingary Vale.
- Restocking and spot herbicide treatment at Parkers and The Valley in localised understocked areas in Winter 2010 with a preceding animal control program.

## **Other Management Issues**

Nil

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