

2004 Softwood Project

Australian Forestry Management Pty Limited (AFM)



Forests NSW Annual Report

Financial Year 2010-2011

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 2004 Softwood Project.

Overview

The plantations at Dr Vance and The Valley are in good condition and are generally performing well.

Rainfall in Hume Region has been well above average during the reporting period, with significant rainfall events during spring and summer. This period of above average rainfall has resulted in generally good tree growth for all plantation areas. Total rainfall at Tumbarumba from July 10 to June 11 was 1,580mm compared to the long term average of 981mm. Total rainfall for Yass was 67% above the long term average.

Stand Condition

The Dr Vance plantation is in good condition with good growth being achieved to date.

Dr Vance (2005 Age Class) showing general tree growth and condition - July 2011.



The Valley property has also seen good growth on trees planted in 2005 and restocked trees planted in 2006, which account for the major portion of the property. Stocking is acceptable in the majority of the property, however recently replanted trees are smaller in some areas compared to those planted in 2005 and 2006.

The Valley (2005 Age Class) – well stocked & good growth



Pest and Disease Information

Minimal areas of pest damage were noted during the report period.

Dothistroma needle blight is present in The Valley in low levels, similar to other plantation areas in the Region (refer photo on following page), and is associated with wet seasonal condition during spring, summer and autumn. Dothistroma will require monitoring for increased levels of infestation which can adversely affect tree growth to the extent that treatment is justified.

alley (2005 Age Class) – example of low level
Dothistroma



Activities Undertaken

Grazing of cattle has continued in The Valley, where the trees are sufficiently well established. The grazing is conditional on there being no significant tree damage and is being carefully monitored by FNSW to achieve this outcome. Grazing has significantly reduced grass fuel levels and associated fire hazards during the summer.

Pest animal control has occurred during the reporting period, predominantly feral pig control.

Fire trail and road maintenance and noxious weed control has also been undertaken.

Fire Incidents

There were no fire incidents within or in close to the 2004 Softwood Project plantations. The impact of the fire which occurred in January 2010 is shown in the photo below and at Annexure A.

Other Management Issues

The residual effects of drought and animal pests has resulted in the need for ongoing localised replanting over a three year period up to 2008. This has lead to areas of plantation having a range of age classes (predominantly 1 to 3 years old) and stocking densities. It is anticipated that there may be some impact on the future productivity (timber yield) of these areas. The extent of this impact will not be quantifiable until 2015 when age 10 inventory is undertaken.

Treatment of the area burnt by wildfire in January 2010 commenced with herbicide treatment for blackberry. However due to the very heavy re infestation of the site by blackberry a decision to delay planting until winter 2012 was made to enable more comprehensive blackberry treatment prior to planting. It is noted that post plant blackberry control using chemicals is not an option on steep sites as it is restricted by labelling conditions. If heavy blackberry regrowth occurs post planting it is likely to significantly affect tree seedling survival on this site.

It is also proposed that up to 10 hectares of 2005 AC plantation that is severely under stocked (due to very heavy blackberry regrowth) is reviewed for blackberry control and replanting over the next 12 months. These affected areas were originally reported in the 2008-09 report.

Valley (2005 Age Class) – Highlighting area burnt in January 2010 on top of hill and area of poorer stocking on mid-slope



Planned Activities for 2011/2012

- Replanting of area burnt by wildfire
- Maintaining grazing in suitable areas to reduce grass fire hazard
- Pest animal control
- Blackberry spraying
- Maintenance of tracks and access roads
- Fire risk reduction works and surveillance
- Identification and signage of plantation fire roads to comply with amendments to the Plantations and Afforestation Code .
- Review and replanting of areas where 2006 replanting has failed due to heavy blackberry regrowth.

Report Prepared by

Charlie Taylor
Operations and Protection Manger
Hume Region
Forests NSW

For
Bob Germantse
Regional Manger Hume

Map of Area affected by 27-01-2010 Fire Incident:

