

APPLICATION TO HARVEST AND EXPORT NATIVE WILDLIFE

Title and Introduction

Scientific name: *Dicksonia antarctica*

Common name: Soft Tree fern

Location of harvest:

The Aire Valley and Websters Hill softwood plantation is situated in the Otway Ranges in southern Victoria (see Attachments 1 & 2).

Description:

Fibrous trunk plant ranging in size from 15cm to 180 cm in trunk height. Diameter 15cm – 40cm are selected. Fronds broad and rolling with smooth and shiny appearance. Ferns can grow to a height of 15 metres.

Protection:

Dicksonia antarctica is a protected species that requires a permit under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* of 1988.

Statement of general goals and aims

The area that has the population of treeferns will be harvested. There will be no harvesting along streamside reserves and selective mature treeferns will be left for natural reproduction.

Harvest details

Area of harvesting:

The Aire Valley and Websters Hill softwood plantations are situated in the Otway Ranges in southern Victoria. The approx size is 3500 hectares (see Attachments 1 & 2).

Details of land ownership:

Please find details of ownership and copies of relevant permits attached (see Attachments 3&4).

Quantity of harvesting:

Allocation of 35,000 plants would be initially requested for export movement each year. This will be measured by tags issued from the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

Methods of harvesting and equipment:

All harvesting is by selective hand cutting and chainsaws. Sleds, a small tractor and a 4WD motorbike are the equipment used for removal. We also have on site first aid and fire fighting equipment as it a commercial operation, there is minimal impact on the habitat from our harvesting operations. All staff are fully trained in the use of the equipment and hold relative licences. And comply with relative work safe practices.

Timing and duration of harvesting period:

Permits allow harvesting twelve months of the year but it is mainly between October and May each year.

Monitoring and assessment

Resource assessment:

There is ongoing monitoring of *Dicksonia antarctica* populations conducted by the officer for the Department of Sustainability and Environment based at Colac, Victoria.

Independent supervision:

Independent supervision of harvesting is monitored by the land owner and the Department of Sustainability and Environment officer based in Colac, Victoria, under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

Effects on the species and other species:

Effects on harvesting on the species shall have minimal impact as salvaging harvesting is carried out for commercial value ferns in a small region

That is not located in national parks or river ways. It is believed that the salvage harvesting has minimal effect on other species within the ecosystem.

Further monitoring:

It is proposed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment to establish further control and monitoring of sites within the Otway Ranges. Further information is available from the regional officer.

Management strategies:

Due to the fact that it is a commercial farm there is no effect on our species or other species or plant. We do however leave 50% of treeferns from filter strip areas. Stream side reserves are fully protected and a minimum density of mature treeferns per hectare is left.

Compliance:

Restrictions on harvest and sale are controlled under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and the mechanism to monitor is by way of permit and tagging of ferns with identification of permit holder.

Background information:

The species *Dicksonia antarctica* is found in considerable populations in the nature reserves and national parks of southern Victoria.

These include:

- Otway National Park
- Redwater Flora Reserve
- Melba Gully State Park
- Big Tree West Barham Reserve
- Olangla Flora Reserve
- Closed water catchments: Olangla Weir, West Gellibrand Weir, Arknas Creek and others.

In the 1930's natural rainforest was cleared for softwood production. Natural regrowth that has occurred since that period is the plant that is to be taken. Average age of plants taken is thought to be between 5 and 25 years.