Forest Management Plan

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AKS Forest Solutions acknowledges and pays respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians and original owners of the land which we manage.

Contents

Overview

AKS Forest Solutions (AKSFS) is a responsible forest manager and wood broker operating in the private forest sector in Tasmania. We are committed to providing our clients with a quality outcome in terms of service, forest management and financial returns. We operate as a wholly Tasmanian-owned business, engaging respected and skilled employees and contractors able to deliver sustainable forest management while optimising economic outcomes and maintaining a profitable business.

As evidence of our policy of continual improvement, AKSFS has maintained certification within the Responsible Wood Certification Scheme to the Australian Standard for Sustainable Forest Management (AS/NZS4708:2021) for *Forest management and brokers for native forest and plantations in Tasmania,* providing certification for the properties under our management that form our Defined Forest Area, (DFA).

Purpose

The purpose of this Forest Management Plan, a strategic planning framework, is to communicate management objectives and principles as applied to AKSFS's dispersed DFA and the systems and procedures to achieve them.

This is the oversight document supported by the Tasmanian Forest Practices System. The Tasmanian Forest Practices System works in an adaptive management framework taking into account the social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes of its decision-making processes. It is supported by legislation, namely the *Forest Practices Act 1985*, a code of practice, the *Forest Practices Code 2020*, a regulator, the Forest Practices Authority, a specialist group, on-ground research, trained and appointed planners and supervisors, Forest Practices Officers (FPO's) and detailed operational plans, Forest Practices Plans, (FPP's).

Stakeholder input was initially sought to review the draft Forest Management Plan. Stakeholder feedback has been included in this document and a major stakeholder review is undertaken every five years. Stakeholder engagement and relationships of interested and affected parties is an ongoing process at multiple levels from field operations and neighbours to Government departments and portfolio Ministers.

Scope

AKS Forest Solutions Pty Ltd is certified to AS/NZS4708:2021 for:

Forest management and brokers of native forest and plantation.

The Defined Forest Area is listed in the 'DFA Register' and maps and audit report summaries are available on our website www.aksforestsolutions.com.au

The scope of the Forest Management Plan encompasses the requirements of the Australian Standard for Sustainable Forest Management, Tasmania's legislative and planning framework. It has been designed as appropriate to scale. This document is the oversight document for the Forest Management System of AKS Forest Solutions Pty Ltd. Our certification scope covers both native forests and plantations.

AKS Forest Management - in context

ASNZS 4708:2021, Section 4

This AKSFS Forest Management Plan is the oversight document that is used to guide decision-making and planning throughout the full range of forest operations. The Forest Management Plan is subject to annual internal review.

Forest management and harvest planning must comply with the *Forest Practices Act 1985* and the *Forest Practices Code 2020*. The forest practices system fosters a co-regulatory approach based on self-management by forest owners and the forest manager. Together they are responsible for ensuring that forest practices comply with the Code through the development of a certified forest practices plan.

Forest Practices Plans (FPPs) document and plan proposed forest operational activities at a detailed level. Proposed activities are to meet or exceed all legislative requirements for forest operations. FPPs have a timeframe in which they are active. FPPs are prepared for all road construction, quarrying, harvesting and forest establishment operations. These plans specify the significant environmental, cultural and heritage values that occur on the plan area and the prescriptions developed to manage and protect them.

Resource Description

We operate state-wide on predominantly privately owned native and planted forests. This provides a very varied resource in terms of forest communities, species planted and past management regimes. AKSFS certification to AS/NZS4708 covers both native forests and plantations. Our Defined Forest Area (DFA) consists of management units where we have a contractual commitment to management and harvesting that is released after a successful certificate of compliance. Properties are added to our DFA once a legal commitment has been received from the landowner and the proposed area has been inspected for natural and cultural values, the sustainability of forest management including financial returns and a provisional boundary has been established.

Native Forest

The native forest estate in Tasmania is spread across various tenures with approximately 50% of the available production native forest existing on private property. Native Forest vegetation varies from mixed-aged dry eucalypt forests generally at lower elevations to high-altitude wet sclerophyll forests. Tasmania's private native forests are managed under *the Forest Practices Act 1985* and *Forest Practices Code 2020* in conjunction with other environmental and planning legislation. The suite of legislation provides the platform for sustainable management of our forests for the long-term supply of wood products, non-wood forest products and environmental services. Several silvicultural systems have been developed for the management of different forest types, including clear-fell systems in even-aged wetter forests to selective harvesting systems in lowland dry forests and shelter-wood systems in higher-altitude forests. We apply the most appropriate silviculture systems informed by research and operational outcomes. The majority of AKSFS' native forest management uses selective harvesting systems.

Plantations

Harvesting of plantations tends to be a highly mechanised operation that generally requires a minimum plantation area of 10 ha to provide good returns to growers. AKSFS have assisted private growers with thinning operations of smaller areas to provide well-managed plantation outcomes.

Hardwood

The hardwood plantation estate consists of *Eucalyptus nitens* and *Eucalyptus globulus* plantations of various sizes from a few hectares to larger estates.
While most plantations have been planted for pulpwood, some have been high-pruned to produce peeler logs. As different product opportunities arise with favourable markets, these will be factored into the log optimisation.

Softwood

The softwood estate is dominated by *Pinus radiata* plantations of various scale from a few hectares to larger estates and with differing past management prior to acceptance to our DFA. Operations include thinning and final crop harvesting with product optimisation being an essential outcome.

Our Defined Forest Area

Our DFA consists of a variable estate of privately owned land where AKSFS retains legally definable management control. Typically, this management control will be in the form of a contractual agreement and/or a current Forest Practices Plan.

The size and distribution of our estate is constantly changing. These changes occur in response to securing management control and approval of Forest Practices Plans. When AKSFS' management control of the land expires, the area is removed from the estate and no longer contributes to the makeup of the DFA. Importantly, however, areas within the estate identified as being environmentally sensitive and reserved as part of an approved but now expired Forest Practices Plan retain the status of "vulnerable land" as defined within the *Forest Practices Act 1985* and have ongoing regulatory protection.

Our DFA Register is kept current. Notification of the DFA size is reported biannually to the scheme owner, Responsible Wood and the certification body or when there is a significant change. Our publically reported maps are updated to coincide with the notification and uploaded to our website.

Stakeholder Engagement

Input into the planning process by interested parties is considered fundamental to sustainable forest management. Stakeholder consultation and engagement is undertaken at a scope and scale appropriate to our business. Our DFA consists of individual privately owned forests whose owners' precedence and business may affect how we can undertake consultation.

Stakeholder consultation is a vitally important input into our planning. Operating in the rural community, AKSFS is aware of the need to engage early with neighbours and those who may be affected by operations. Stakeholder consultation is a continuous process of communication with neighbours, local government, the Forest Practices Authority, customers and others that may be affected by our business. The FPA NOI proces provides a framework for enaggement with stakeholders who are affetced by operations.

Community engagement offers an opportunity for forest managers to demonstrate the good work they do and to receive positive input into planning processes. AKSFS is committed to the process of appropriate stakeholder engagement and provides feedback to all who have contributed.

Engagement Process

AKSFS engages with private landowners through many different forums and media including direct advertising in regional newspapers, rural press and web-based listings. We play an active role in private landowner education through field days, agricultural shows and dinners. Perhaps the most consistent means of referral and engagement is by word of mouth, discussion amongst landowners who have had AKSFS undertake operations on their property and who make a recommendation to neighbours and friends.

Once a landowner makes initial contact and expresses interest in pursuing an operation, a letter of introduction is sent describing the AKSFS approach and basic operations. If a landowner wishes to take it to the next step a site inspection is undertaken to ensure that a sustainable outcome -both financially and from a forest management perspective, can be achieved. An assessment of harvestable volumes is made and a proposal is prepared with the pricing of products to optimise returns.

Depending on the scale of the operation either a letter of acceptance or a formal contract is sent to the landowner. This is the method of securing engagement for further work to be undertaken and the subsequent addition of the agreed area to our DFA.

Once an agreement is signed the in-depth forest practices planning process is initiated. This requires discussion with the landowner regarding their management objectives, further site visits, liaison with the Forest Practices Authority, the purchasing companies, contractors, neighbours and local government.

AKSFS demonstrates management control for private property wood in several ways. First, via a signed commitment from the landowner, also usually as the Applicant to the FPP. Management control is designated in FPPs through the "Applicant" of the plan. The applicant is the person who applies to the Forest Practices Authority (FPA) for the FPP to be certified. Once certified the applicant can apply for a variation to that FPP, and is also responsible for the Certificate of Compliance to be lodged at the end of each discrete operation to ensure compliance has occurred. It is AKSFS policy to be named as the applicant on FPP's whenever possible, to provide secure outcomes and conformance to AS/NZS4708, the Australian Standard for Sustainable Forest Management.

Property Planning

Forest management planning and forest harvesting are carried out following the Forest Practices Code. AKSFS has a standardised planning procedure for the development of FPPs that uses a planning checklist as a review before certification of the plan. All areas to be harvested undergo an assessment, including searching available conservation databases to identify any significant natural and cultural values that require specific management. Threatened fauna and flora species and communities require particular management; an example is the wedge-tailed eagle. Wedge-tailed eagle nests require protection by law and at least a 10 ha reserve is to be established. There are also specific rules about operations near occupied sites and during the breeding season. Expert systems have been developed to assist with planning and the FPA website has many planning tools and technical notes that are formally part of the Forest Practices system.

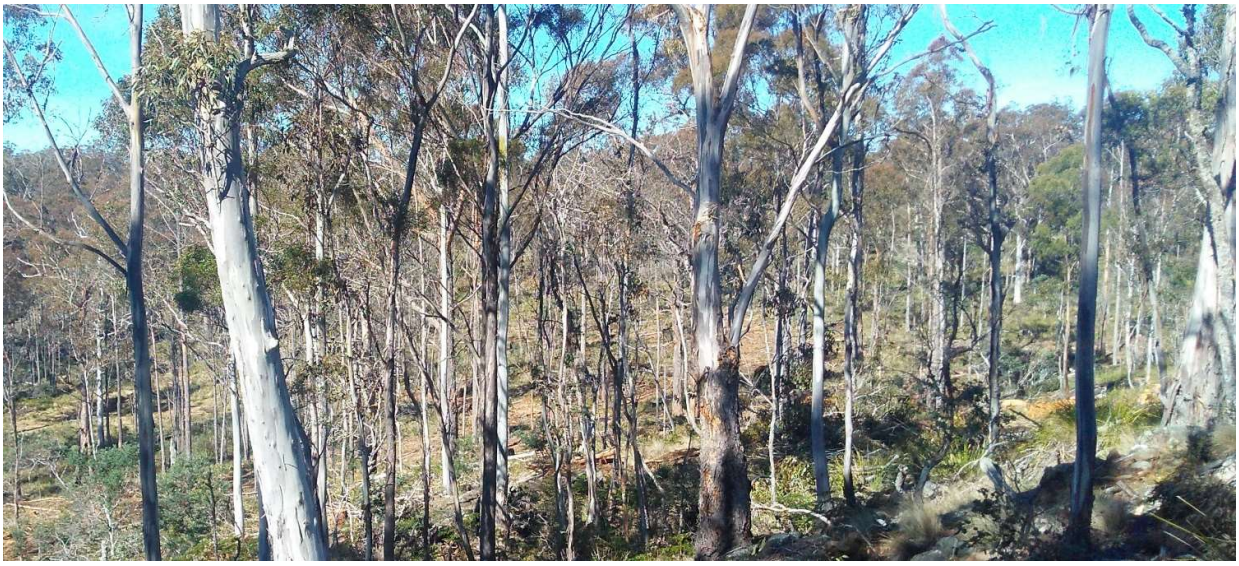
Site-specific plans (FPPs) are developed and a detailed map is produced that includes areas reserved from harvesting to protect natural and cultural values and identifies harvesting areas. The development of the FPP requires advance notification of affected local governments and neighbours. Private forests that have been declared Private Timber Reserves do not require development approval from the local government. AKSFS contacts local government as a standard procedure to maintain our good working relationship regardless of the planning schemes zoning of forest operations as '*permitted as of right'.* Local governments are notified of likely log truck movements, identified school bus routes and times and other council considerations. All private forests, native and plantation outside Private Timber Reserves and '*permitted use zoning'*, require local government approval prior to the certification of the forest practices plan and before the commencement of operations.

Leadership

ASNZS 4708:2021 Section 5

AKS Forest Management is committed to meeting our compliance obligations and to the requirements of the standard. The annual management review provides a platform to review operations on the DFA and provide feedback as to the level of resources required to meet these requirements. As AKS operates a variable DFA the is little scope for planning on an estate-wide basis, or to influence the landowner's intentions, however, while these areas are with our DFA, AKS can ensure that all operations operate within our management system and we are accountable for the aspects under our management control. Several aspects of the business are reviewed at the management review including this plan and the register of Risks and Opportunities, opportunities for research, required resources for the operation of the business and ensuring that the forest management system achieves its intended outcomes. These documents are part of our internal processes and are commercial in confidence.

Planning that relates to specific coupes is covered in the planning process for developing FPPs that are covered later in this plan. All FPPs are available through the Foret Practices Authority, although may have some personal details redacted.

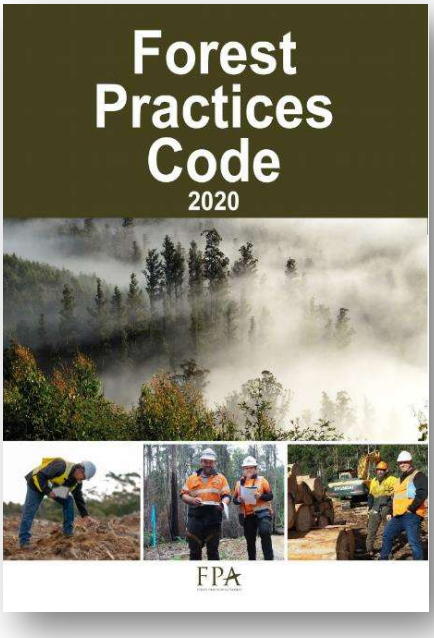


Our Forest Management Policy is reviewed at our annual management review., It is available on our website www.aksforestsolutions.com.au and is displayed in our office.

Planning

ASNZS 4708:2021 Section 6

Forest management and forest practices in Tasmania that occur in native forest or plantations on private land are governed by many levels of regulation. This includes local planning schemes and regulations, State laws, regulations and policies that are influenced by Federal legislation that is in turn affected by International Laws and Conventions that have been ratified by the Australian Government. Of overriding importance are the Forest Practices Act 1985 and the Forest Practices Code (2020).



AKS must notify the certification body in writing within five business days of any breach of regulatory requirements within the scope of certification.

Appendix 1 lists a hierarchy of conventions, policies, codes of practice, and legal requirements to undertake forest operations within Tasmania. It identifies the means to achieve compliance.

Local Government

AKSFS works across Tasmania and consequently is directly involved with a number of municipalities. We strive to foster good working relationships with local government who are one of our primary stakeholders. Local government interactions relate to road use and maintenance, log truck traffic, school bus routes and times, planning permits and development applications.

Operational Control.

AS/NZS 4708:2021 Section 8

Accident and Emergency

Accident and emergency procedures are included in the Forest Operations Safety Plan. The FPP identifies the nearest Emergency Meeting Point (EMP) EMPs can also be viewed via the ListMAP.

Well-managed forest operations limit risk. However, risk management is a very important component of forest planning and operations. Risks can include anything from poor forest practices, accidents and emergencies, fire prevention and suppression, spills and pollution, and weed infestation.

Performance evaluation.

AS/NZS 4708:2021 Section 9

Comprehensive systems are required to ensure that forest management embraces the principal of continual improvement. This includes the use of effective stakeholder participation and strong management performance. It also enables and encourages improvement to forest management practices and outcomes based on learning and experience.

Our operations are audited internally and externally. The internal audit system routinely monitors all aspects of our business, including operational, our forest management system and safety audits. We regularly monitor and audit all of our operations and Forest Practices compliance audits are undertaken at the end of each discrete operational phase and a certificate of compliance lodged if compliant or following appropriate remedial action.
Our internal monitoring and audit system is based on check lists of compliance against the FPP and other legislative requirements. It also includes corrective actions, agreed to by the principal contractor's representative and Company to repair or make good. The audit is likely to be undertaken at least once per month. The results of these audits are recorded and entered into a system to track any trends that may be occurring with the management unit or by a particular contractor. The analysis of results is reported at quarterly review meetings.

Our Forest Management Plan (FMP) and management system is reviewed at our annual management review. This review takes note of any trends, negative or positive, that will lead to an improvement in our systems. Our FMP is externally reviewed through the Responsible Wood certification scheme and the plan itself will be subject to a stakeholder review every 5 years.

External audits are undertaken by the Forest Practices Authority concerning the Forest Practices Act and Code and the Certification Body concerning AS/NZS 4708. The Forest Practices Authority undertakes an annual audit of 15% of all forest practices operations throughout the State

Monitoring

Operations monitoring is undertaken regularly. Feedback and corrective actions are used to improve operational outcomes. Non-conformances identified have corrective actions agreed upon between the contractor's representative and the Company. Any required corrective actions are recorded on a register with closure dates and outcomes. This information is reported at regular company meetings and the annual management review. Forest Practices audits are also undertaken and contribute to monitoring operations performance. The Forest Management System is also monitored from an internal audit of the system with its own review process.

Performance Reviews

Performance reviews are essential to the concept of continual improvement. The review process for AKSFS involves regular reviews, reporting and feedback into the annual management review. The agenda of the annual management review meeting is templated to provide consistency and actions are fed back into the system to provide a culture of continual improvement. The agenda picks up on the resources required to meet this standard and our compliance obligations, work, health and safety, monitoring reports, operations, wood flows, market changes and opportunities, local Government relationships and issues, neighbour/stakeholder issues and research and development. Supporting science and operations improvements can come from a variety of sources including; attending field days, conferences, FPA and other training. Other regular and useful sources of review that are consulted include the journals of Forestry Australia, Timber Industry News, Daily Timber and Friday Offcuts.

Nonconformities & Corrective Actions

AS/NZS 4708:2021 Section 10

A nonconformity is defined as a non-fulfilment of a requirement of the standard. Nonconformities may be identified from an internal audit, external audit or through the course of normal business.

Nonconformities will be managed in accordance with the internal AKS Nonconformity policy.

Sustainability Criteria

Maintaining Forests & Carbon

AS/NZS 4708:2021 Section 11.1

Active forest management has been recognised as a potential tool for reducing anthropogenic climate change. In a recent 2021 report to the European Forest Institute (Schmidt et al 2021) it was noted "*Forests and forestry play an essential role, as they provide natural carbon sinks and their products can substitute for emissions-intensive materials, thereby reducing emissions*". As a requirement of the standard, AKS keeps an estimate current for both current and future carbon stock on the DFA at the time. This estimate is updated annually. AKS does not engage in native forest conversion to non-forest except in the very limited circumstances outlined in AS/NZS 4708:2021. Note that road construction required for forest management is not considered conversion.

We aim to maintain forest carbon and minimise fossil fuel use by undertaking the following measures:

- Regular maintenance of our vehicles
- Using the shortest legal cart route from forest to market wherever possible
- If required, undertake the burning of harvest by-products: either broadacre or properly constructed heaps at optimal moisture content from both fire safety and emissions control.
- Our management of native forests aims to maintain forest vigour through the application of appropriate silviculture that includes selective harvesting and thinning.
- When engaged in plantation management, our aim is to maintain the health and vigour of the plantation through active management that may include thinning and other silvicultural treatments as prescribed in the Sustainable Timber Tasmania technical bulletins and prescriptions. This aids in carbon sequestion by absorbing and storing carbon within the timber products for the life of the product.

Forest Ecosystem Health

AS/NZS 4708:2021 Section 11.2

Pests & Disease

During the initial assessment process any obvious weed incursion and issues of forest health relating to disease or pests will be noted and reviewed with the landowner if remedial works are required. Any observations of noxious weeds identified are conveyed to the landowner who is legally responsible for

control. The Farm Forestry Toolbox provides a ready reference for identifying pests and diseases in plantations and native forest.

To reduce the risk of weed invasion all harvesting and earth moving equipment entering the DFA will be washed down before leaving the previous location. Washdown procedures are to follow the *Tasmanian Washdown Guidelines for Weed and Disease Control- Machinery, Vehicles and Equipment.*

Phytopthora cinnamomii

Specific precautions are to be taken in machinery movements, planning, and management in areas know or suspected to be infected with *Phytopthora cinnamomii*, commonly known as cinnamon fungus or root rot fungus. This root rot fungus devastates susceptible vegetation communities. *Phytophthora* is impossible to eradicate once established and can spread rapidly in surface run-off and groundwater percolation. The risk of spreading *Phytophthora* can be reduced by machinery hygiene, use of *Phytophthora*-free material in road construction and by avoiding known areas of infection by attention to infrastructure planning.

Myrtle Rust

Biosecurity Tasmania has detected myrtle rust, *Puccinia psidii* in Tasmania. While it appeared isolated to the importation of domestic plants, this is a serious threat to many of our native species, particularly those in the *Myrtaceae* family. This includes all our *Eucalyptus, Leptospermum* and *Melaleuca* species. The following web site provides a fact sheet describing the disease and its spread. https://nre.tas.gov.au/Documents/myrtle.pdf. At temperatures of 15-25 °C fresh active infections are readily identified by the pustules of bright yellow spores on the leaves, petioles, buds and soft fruit of Myrtaceae species. AKSFS staff are fully informed and any suspicious infections observed will be notified to Biosecurity immediately.

This is considered the most significant and serious threat to our biodiversity and commercial native forest industry.

Chemical Use

As a responsible forest manager AKSFS minimises the use of chemical inputs: fertiliser, pesticide and herbicide. Native forest management, effectively organic forestry, rarely if ever requires the use of chemicals. An exception may be legislated control of an invasion of declared weeds. Natural regeneration that is being extensively browsed would be controlled by licensed and approved professional shooters.

As managers of established plantations, the minimisation of chemical use is a priority. Where use of chemicals is unavoidable application is undertaken by licensed contractors according to label conditions, off-label permits, laws and regulations.

Fire

Unintended fire resulting from forest operations can have serious consequences. Particular measures are specified in the Forest Practices Plan to prevent fires from spreading to adjacent land. The Forest Industry Fire Prevention Protocol and the fire- fighting equipment provisions of the *Fire Service (Miscellaneous) Regulations 1996* specify the types and amount of fire fighting equipment required at forest operations,

its location and actions to be taken to monitor severe fire weather conditions. AKSFS undertakes a pre-season check of fire fighting equipment on all our contractors to ensure that it is all present and operational. Forest contractors must have two employees trained to take regular fire weather readings during the fire season that may lead to a temporary shutdown during severe conditions. Prescribed burning, either for regeneration or fuel reduction purposes, is subject to a Fire Management Plan.

Pollution

Each operation must ensure that all care is taken when handling fuel, there is a specific provision in each FPP. Any spill of any fuel or contaminants that can cause serious or material environmental harm is to be reported immediately to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Immediate action will be taken by the contractor to restrict any spillage as soon as it becomes known. There are rules governing the storage of fuels and the proximity of fuel storage containers to water bodies. All equipment must be well maintained to minimise the risk of fuel and/or oil leaks.

Illegal Activities

Illegal activities can increase the risk to forest operations as well as the risk of illegal fire. Any illegal activities will be reported to the landowner and/or the police if appropriate.

Biodiversity

AS/NZS 4708:2021 Section 11.3

Assessment of Coupe Natural and Cultural Values

All areas to be harvested undergo an assessment to identify significant values within or adjacent to the coupe. This process can lead to a considerable area being excluded from harvesting and/or changes to planning to manage any identified issues. The following natural and cultural values are assessed during coupe planning:

Flora Forests and grassland communities identified as having high conservation value. Assessment of flora values includes mapping of the forest communities present in the coupe area and the presence or potential presence of any threatened flora species

Fauna Forest and grassland communities identified as containing, or potentially containing threatened species are managed to ensure the maintenance of native fauna habitat

Cultural Heritage. Areas identified as having Indigenous or historic heritage values. Examples include Aboriginal artefact scatters or settler's huts that require specific management prescriptions.

Earth Sciences. Areas containing significant landforms or limestone karst features requiring protection and landslip hazards needing specific management

Soil and Water The protection of forest soils is important to minimise soil degradation by inappropriate operations. Buffer zones adjacent to streams, rivers and other water bodies are retained to protect water quality via filtration zones adjoining forest operations. By providing shade, these buffer zones also assist

maintaining aquatic ecosystems and riparian values

Visual management. Areas are managed to retain their important visual or social landscape values.

Significant Biodiversity Vales

Tasmania – Significant Biodiversity Values	
Legal Instrument	**Threatened categories**
Threatened Species Protection Act 1995	(a) Endangered (b) Vulnerable (c) Rare
Nature Conservation Act 2002	(a) Threatened native vegetation communities

In Tasmania, any Significant Biodiversity Values (SBVs) are classified as "Endangered, Vulnerable or Rare" under the Threatened Species Protection Act or as "Threatened" under the Nature Conservation Act. These values are then managed under the Forest Practices Authority system by agreement with the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment (DPIPWE) now renamed Natural Resources & Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas). Prescriptions are provided through the Threatened Species Advisor system, and specialists are available through the FPA if additional information is required.

Conservation of Natural and Cultural Values

The identification of significant natural and cultural values is a key component of Tasmania's highly regarded forest practices system. Together with the protection of threatened species, communities and habitats, water quality, soils and geology of significance, visual issues and cultural values, the system ascribes a high level of specialist input through the development of expert systems and conservation management prescriptions. The net effect is a considerable reservation area on each property set aside to protect natural and cultural values.

The planning process of Tasmania's Forest Practices system requires the identification of natural and cultural values through interrogating available databases, site inspections and specialist input. This process involves initial interrogation of databases to identify threatened vegetation communities, known existing threatened flora and fauna communities and species, likely habitat, known cultural heritage sites, potential aboriginal artefacts, geological, soil & water and landscape values and visual management. Site assessment further refines this and expert advice may be required to develop a management prescription within the FPP.

The planning prescriptions of the Forest Practices System; use of expert systems, specialist site visits and prescriptions cover several criteria of the Responsible Wood Standard:

Flora

Tasmania's forests contain a wide diversity of native plant communities reflecting the variety of

environments found in the state. Forest communities range from the dry eucalypt forests and woodlands in the east of the state, to the tall wet forests found in the higher rainfall areas in the west and south of the state. Native non-forest vegetation (e.g. moorland, heath, wetland and native grassland) may be associated with native forests (and sometimes plantations).

The FPA has developed a comprehensive Forest Botany Manual that assists planners to identify species and communities at risk. Legislation has been enacted at the Commonwealth and State level to provide protection. The Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* lists vulnerable, endangered and critically endangered flora species that are protected by that Act.

Threatened native vegetation communities include naturally rare plant communities as well as communities that were once widespread, but are now significantly depleted because of clearing over the last two hundred years. Threatened communities, both forest and non-forest, are listed on the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002* and their protection is achieved through the Tasmanian Permanent Native Forest Estate Policy, *the Nature Conservation Act 2002* and the *Forest Practices Act 1985*. (FPA 2013)

Cross-pollination and hybridisation from planted exotic eucalypts pose long-term issues to the genetic integrity and diversity of our local eucalypts. The FPA Flora Technical Bulletin 12 provides comprehensive guidance on the risks involved in plantation species hybridising with adjacent native species. The FPA is to be notified of concerns regarding a plantation's proximity to vulnerable communities.

Fauna

The management of threatened fauna species in Tasmania is covered by legislation and processes that include the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*, the *Tasmanian Nature Conservation Act 2002*, and the Tasmanian *Regional Forest Agreement 1997*. These recognise that a variety of mechanisms are needed to achieve ecologically sustainable forest management concerning fauna species of high conservation significance. (FPA 2013)

Fauna evaluation is undertaken as part of the biodiversity assessment of potential harvesting units. If known localities or suspected habitat of priority species is identified, the Threatened Fauna Adviser, an expert systems tool, is consulted for recommended action. Examples often managed by AKSFS include wedge-tailed eagles nest identification and management prescriptions. These include a minimum of 10ha reservation and no-activity times during the annual nesting season.

Earth Sciences

AS/NZS 4708:2021 Section 11.4

Soil, water quality and flow and geomorphology special values are considered as part of the evaluation process in order to prevent unacceptable erosion rates; maintain water quality and streamflow for ecological, social and economic reasons and to prevent damage to sites of special scientific interest. The FPA earth sciences process for evaluation of special values provides for the protection of soils by identification of the geology and soil erodibility class. This triggers management prescriptions to minimize the risk and protect the soil, for example, any soil of high erodibility class, landslip hazards and or karst will require specific prescriptions in the FPP.

Water quality is protected through several planning tools and operational measures including the identification of stream classes and the marking of the appropriate width streamside reserves. These reserves make up the most extensive reserve area in our proposed DFA. Wet weather provisions are in the FPC to minimise the runoff of turbid water from operations. These procedures include operational shutdowns, gripping of snig tracks and firebreaks, road and drainage construction to prescribed standards.

Forest Productive Capacity

AS/NZS 4708:2021 Section 11.3

Stand Growth Rates

The growth rates of the native forest we manage are generally not known as the forests have had a history of variable-quality of forest management, often resulting in a degraded outcome. We aim to improve long term productivity by using the most appropriate silviculture in the management and harvesting of the forests. Plantations that we manage will be measured for an estimate of growth unless recent information has been provided. This will inform the best option for silviculture going forward. Modelling can be provided by Private Forests Tasmania (PFT) through the Farm Forestry Toolbox and PFT's detailed analysis delivers a consistent data set.

Product Segregation

AKS Forest Solutions is a forest manager and timber broker who seeks to find the optimal value in managing forests, both native forests and plantations, based on the landowner's objectives, legal requirements, prescribed silviculture and prevailing markets. In most circumstances this will mean maximizing value achieved from harvesting, using the most efficient harvesting systems, cost-effective legal cart routes and careful within-log product optimisation and log segregation. Depending on available markets we can segregate into the following products: sawlogs of various categories, peelers, veneer logs, special species timber, hydro poles, posts for treatment, chopping blocks as well as bridge logs and piles.

There may be occasions when the most cost-effective and environmentally sound outcome is to thin to waste, to maintain the health and vigour of the forest and optimise longer-term economic returns.

Non-Wood Values

Significant non-wood products are identified at the time of field inspection and discussed with the forest owner. Management of products such as honey usually requires the input of expert management and would be undertaken outside the timing of forest harvesting. The development and identification of non-wood values is an evolving area of knowledge, skill and markets. As opportunities arise for sustainable management of non-wood values they will be discussed with the forest owner and where accepted and appropriate, will be incorporated into the forest management plan.

Silviculture

Our forest harvesting operates on the principles of sustainable forest management with the ultimate aim of maintaining all ecological services and providing future generations with a viable forest estate. The Forest Practices System is fundamental to all forest operations in Tasmania, supported by research into appropriate silvicultural management systems, biodiversity, geology, cultural history and landscape management.

A sound science and systems base provides the framework in which forest harvesting and management operations are conducted. The engagement of professional planners, managers and skilled contractors ensures the highest probability of a quality outcome. Another important contributor to success and sustainability is the financial and economic outcomes delivered to landowners and communities by well-planned and managed forest operations. Important risks and opportunities that may affect operation are managed through the Risks and Opportunities register that provides control measures to minimise risks of adverse effects

Native Forests

Silviculture is the active management of forests at the stand or coupe level. The selection of the most appropriate silviculture system is integral to the sustainable management of native forests. Tasmania's native forests vary from tall wet eucalypt-dominated forests, dry sclerophyll forests to higher altitude eucalypt wet and dry forest. AKSFS manages a broad cross-section of these forest types. There are many different forest communities, some significantly reduced in size due to clearing and change of land use. AKSFS predominantly manages drier regrowth forest. Tasmania's Permanent Forest Estate Policy ensures that forest cover is maintained at 95% of the 1996 level across the State and applies to forest community extent within bioregions.

The use of appropriate silviculture ensures that the productivity of the forest is maintained. Combined with the requirements of the Forest Practices Code, this provides that principles of sustainable forest management are applied throughout the planning and operational phases
The regeneration requirements of native forests vary with the type of forest and silviculture system applied. Wet eucalypt forests require some form of a catastrophic event, usually a clear fall and burning regime followed by seeding, whereas drier forests tend to be multi-aged shade-tolerant eucalypts that regenerate by seedling and advanced growth retention. Monitoring of the success of regeneration is a requirement of the Forest Practices Code and is undertaken by AKSFS at 1-year post-harvest, a discrete operational phase requiring a certificate of compliance. Management of native forests could be termed organic forestry as there are virtually no chemical inputs and the systems tend to reflect natural disturbance regimes.

Plantations

The plantations that we manage are typically monocultures of softwood or hardwood species. Plantations are of various ages and have had differing stand management when they are bought into our DFA. AKSFS intends, where appropriate, to improve stand vigour and tree health by thinning, subject to stand age and height.

Softwood
Softwood plantations are predominantly *Pinus radiata* with some minor exceptions that may include

Douglas Fir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, Redwood, *Sequoia sempervirens* and various Cypresses including *Cupressus macrocarpa.* Softwood plantations are generally managed for the highest wood-quality outcome. This regime may take over 25 years to produce a marketable sawlog. The management required to achieve this may vary with the site, from knot control, and multiple thinning regimes to high pruning and thinning. Softwood plantations grown for pulpwood are predominantly *Pinus radiata* on poorer sites.

Hardwood

Hardwood plantations are dominated by eucalyptus species and are predominantly grown for fibre and consist mainly of Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globulus)* at lower elevations and Shining Gum, (*Eucalyptus nitens)* on other sites. Rotation lengths are site-dependent and vary from 12 to 25 years. Some plantations have been high-pruned and require thinning to produce peeler logs. Sustainable management of these plantation resources by AKSFS includes thinning to increase stand vigour and health or final crop harvesting with advice on planting options for future rotations.

Cultural Values

AS/NZS 4708:2021 Section 11.6

Cultural heritage refers to those places and sites that have been passed down to us from the actions of people in the past, both Aboriginal and European. Historic legal use of the forests will be considered during all stages of forest management planning.

The FPA has developed a comprehensive cultural heritage management system that provides practical guides on how to implement this framework. It highlights the need to assess the heritage values within the area covered by the operation in the planning phase. It also provides tools to be used by Forest Practices Officers including instructions on how to:

- record the sites located
- assess potential impacts
- apply planning tools for management options
- incorporate heritage management into forest practices plans (FPPs)
- ensure forest operators understand their responsibility in individual coupes
- monitor, evaluate and assess performance against stated management prescriptions.

AKS Forest Solutions assesses each area for its cultural heritage using the approach developed by the FPA. Areas identified as important are accorded reservation based on prescriptive measures.

Visual Management

Application of the FPA's visual management system will be undertaken where visual sensitivity is important. The purpose of the analysis and prescriptions is; firstly, to ensure that forestry activities, where visible, are well integrated into the landscape scene; secondly to ensure that the degree of visual change is appropriate to the character of the scenery and the public viewing circumstances; and thirdly, to try to limit or avoid visual exposure and impact.

Social & Economic Benifits

AS/NZS 4708:2021 Section 11.7

Operational Implementation

Before commencing operations, the FPP is signed off by all required parties and must be lodged with the FPA. All required boundaries and reserves are clearly marked in the field prior to operations commencing. Before operations begin, the Company undertakes a formal on-site briefing of the principal harvesting contractor and appropriate employees about the plan and any special requirements. At the same time The Forest Operations Safety Plan, (FOS Plan), which identifies any known hazards is formulated, agreed and signed by all parties.

Operational audits are undertaken every month, and the results are discussed with the harvesting manager. Any non-conformances are noted and a corrective action process to avoid a repeat occurrence or make-good is agreed upon. Information from operational audits is analysed and fed back into the quarterly management review meetings to provide for continuous improvement and identify trends.

Access and Security

Access and required security for properties is negotiated with the landowner. Where the landowner does not live on-site, AKSFS and its contractors are responsible for ensuring gates are locked and security is maintained.

Work, Health & Safety

The well-being and safety of all staff, contractors and the public are of primary importance. The *AKS Forest Solutions Safety Policy* is the key document establishing safe work practices and a safe working environment for staff, visitors, contractors and clients. AKSFS prepares a Forest Operations Safety Plan (FOS Plan) for all its operations before commencement and conducts regular audits of operations that include a safety review. School bus routes are identified and bus times are recognised and honoured by a no-cart period for log trucks.

The Forest Safety Code (Tasmania) 2021 came into effect on Wednesday 2 March 2022. The code addresses many safety issues within the format of 'general principles of safety'; these principles identify hazards that occur across a number of forest operations. This forms the basis of the AKS Forest Solutions FOS Plan and safety management system.

Regional Development

AKSFS contributes to regional development through the use of local forest contractors who are substantial players in regional economies. These contractors provide significant income to other service providers including transport, servicing, fuels, oils and spare parts. The wood produced from operations flows to businesses that operate within Tasmania.

The director of AKSFS is actively involved in the Australian Forest Growers Tasmanian chapter and a member of Forestry Australia. AKSFS actively contributes to farm forestry networks and provides service to small block plantation management. Our representatives engage in farm forestry forums and conferences providing practical input to new initiatives.

Skills Development

Training and skills record

Records of induction, training and skills are kept for all contractors and staff. A forest contractor audit (Forest Operations Compliance Monitoring) is undertaken on a regular basis and the operators' licenses to operate are checked for validity and fit for the task. Competency standards are established by ForestWorks and are inherent in the training and accreditation processes. An annual review is undertaken of skills requirements and checked against the current monitoring system and a check is made of the Training and Skills Register to see if any gaps exist. Notifications are then sent to contractors requiring them to upgrade their skills to the required level or engage someone with the appropriate training and valid licenses. This report forms part of the Annual Management review.

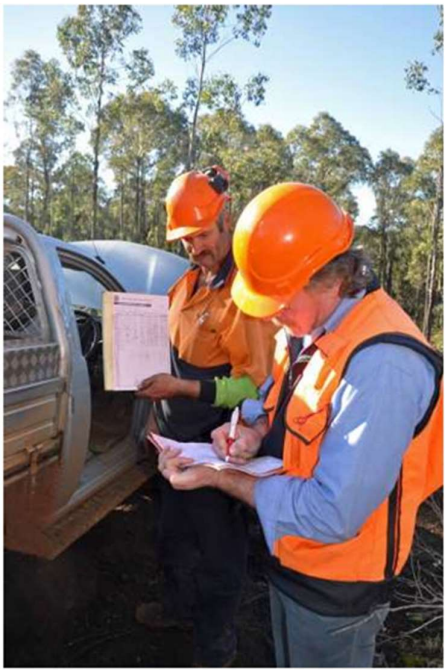
Workers Rights

AKSFS is an equal opportunity employer and recognises the right of workers and contractors to be a part of labour organisations.

In conclusion, this forest management plan is our oversight document that informs our forest management system. It is available for download on our web site www.aksforestsolutions and we welcome your comments.

Tony Stonjek
Director
AKS Forest Solutions

Date: April 2024



Appendix 1: Legal Context

Legislation	Relevance (I, International, F, Federal, S, State)	Means of Compliance
Conventional on Biological Diversity 1993	I, Objective to develop national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.	The national strategy for the conservation of biological diversity fulfils Australia's obligation
Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999	F, Legal framework to protect and manage flora, fauna, ecological communities and cultural heritage of a national significance.	Through enabling legislation and operational prescriptions through the Forest Practices System.
National Strategy on Ecological Sustainable Development	F, Outlines key objectives for the management of Australia's native forests.	This is a strategic policy framework for governments to ensure ESD principles and objectives are incorporated in policy.
National Forest Policy Statement 1992	F, Outlines agreed objectives and policies for the future of Australia's public and private forests.	Embedded at the national level, directly affecting forest policy development at Federal and State levels.
Regional Forest Agreement (Land Classification) Act 1998 RFA Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement 2005	F & S, An intergovernmental agreement to provide long term sustainable forest management, an enhanced reserve system across tenure and security to industry.	Incorporated in State legislation.
Aboriginal Relics Act 1975	S, Provide for the protection of all Aboriginal relics	Provisions in the FPP
Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1995	S, Prevents restricted chemicals being used without a permit, registered under AgVet Code with approved labelling	Chemical Management Branch within the Biosecurity and Product Integrity Division of Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
Boundary Fences Act 1908	S, Regulated the erection & repair of boundary fences	Liaison between neighbours
Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994	S, Establishes duty of care on everyone to prevent or min. environmental harm. Defines potential harmful activities and notification requirements.	Environment Protection Authority is a statutory authority independent of Government supported by the EPA Division of the Department of Primary Industries, Park Water and Environment.
Forestry (Fair Contract Codes) Act 2001	S, Provides for the approval of codes developed by forestry industry to improve fairness of contracts or services within the forest industry.	Forestry (Fair Contract Codes) Act 2001
Fire Services Act 1979	S, Provides for the controlled use of fire in urban and rural environments	Fire permits, forest fire operations equipment, provision in the FPP
Forest Practices Act 1985 (FPA) Forest Practices Amendment Act 2019	S, Establishes the framework for regulating forest practices across all tenures; requires development and implementation of the *Forest Practices Code*	Certified Forest Practices Plan
Forest Practice Code 2020(FPC)	S, The FPC is a practical system for the off reserve management of environmental, cultural, geological/soils, water and visual values. The FPC includes expert systems and procedures for the management of these values.	Certified Forest Practices Plan
Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995	S, Promote the identification, assessment and protection of places having significant historical cultural heritage.	Certified Forest Practices Plan
Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993	S, Implements the Resource Planning and Management System to achieve sustainable outcomes from the use and development of the state's natural and physical resources	Development Application outside a PTR
Local Government (Highways) Act, 1982	S & L, Establishes Municipal authority over road establishment, use, management and maintenance.	Individual Local Governments issue permits to use
Permanent Forest Estate Policy	S, Maintains a permanent forest estate that comprises areas of native forest managed on a sustainable basis both within formal reserves	Broad acre land clearing on private land to cease in 2015. Does not include

	and within multiple-use forests across public and private land	silvicultural prescriptions such as clearfell to regenerate native forest with native forest.
Private Forests Act 1994	S, Creates an Authority responsible for promoting private forestry. With the objective to facilitate and expand the development of the private forest resource in Tasmania in a manner that is consistent with sound forest land management practices.	Manages the Private Timber Reserve application process. Informs private growers. Develops new initiatives, davises government.
Roads and Jetties Act 1935	S, Affects policy relating to use of public roads	Liaison with Local Government
State Policies & Projects Act 1993	Provides for the development of State Policies to ensure a consistent approach is maintained throughout the State. Protection of Agricultural Land Policy 2000 requires planning schemes to treat plantations as agricultural land use.	State Policies & Projects Act 1993
Tasmanian Nature Conservation Act 2002	S, To provide for the conservation and protection of fauna flora and geological diversity and declaration of national parks and reserves	Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment through Tasmania Parks ad Wildlife Service.
Threatened Species Act 1995	S, Provides for the conservation and management of threatened flora and fauna.	The use of expert systems and procedures for site specific recommendations in a certified Forest Practices Plan.
Water Management Act 1999	S, Provides for the management of Tasmania's water resources.	From 30th April 2007, dam works authorised by a dam permit granted under the Water Management Act 1999 do not require an FPP.
Weed Management Act 2000	S, Requires landowner to eradicate/control designated declared weeds	Managed and enforced by Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and Environment
Work Health and Safety Act 2012 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012	F & S, The WHS Act provides a framework to protect the health, safety and welfare of all workers at work and of other people who might be affected by the work.	High degree of self management, administered by Workplace Standards
Forest Safety Code (Tasmania) 2020	S, Accepted by the new WHS Act 2012	Developed between the forest manager and contractor. A preservered Code of Practice. Can be used to show industry best practice.
Tasmanian Forest Managers Good Neighbour Protocol 2020	S, Developed to promote constructive cooperation and exchange between neighbour landowners. Proactively manage issues of concern. Demosntrate that sustainably manage forest can deliver multiple positive outcomes.	The Protocol an agreement bewteen maajor forest managers provides a framework for neighbouring landowners to manager shared resosponsibilities.
The Tourism and Forestry Protocol Agreement 2017	S, facilitate an increased understanding and communication between the two industries.	A framework established for cooperation, agreed to by Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania, Sustainable Timber Tasmania FIAT a TFGA
Memorandum of Understanding between Tasmania Fires Service and Forest Industry Management Committte Forest Managers for Management of Bushfires 2019/20 to 2022/23	S, Provides broad working arrangements between TFS and FFIMC forest Managers wher bushfires occur.	Bushfire Operations MOU between TFS and FIFMC Managers. Does not include STT and PW

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Native Forest Silviculture Technical Bulletin No.9 – Rainforest Silviculture.

Native Forest Silviculture Technical Bulletin No.10 – Blackwood.

Native Forest Silviculture Technical Bulletin No. 11 Native Forest Silviculture

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