

Logging Bermagui State Forest: bad for the climate, bad for the forest ecosystems, a threat to the Bermagui River and to Bermagui's tourist and other industries, and a cost to taxpayers

Forests NSW has scheduled integrated logging of compartment 2004 and thinning of compartment 2005 of the Bermagui State Forest, to begin in October 2008 and continuing into 2009.

Forests NSW have indicated their desire to move subsequently into Murrah, Tanja and Mumbulla State Forests. Mumbulla SF is home to a recovering koala population, has a viable and valuable aquaculture industry immediately downstream, and forms the traditional 'highway' for local indigenous peoples to move between the coast (where they lived) and Mumbulla Mountain (sacred and ceremonial).

Recommendation: that the Bermagui, Murrah, Tanja and Mumbulla State Forests not be logged, but managed in perpetuity for their carbon storage, water yield, biodiversity, and cultural values.

The Bermagui compartments are part of a corridor between Gulaga and Biamanga National Parks. They are essential areas for successful recolonisation of plants and wildlife, including the koalas that used to inhabit the area. As climate change impacts become more severe corridors such as these are increasingly important in reducing species and genetic loss.

The corridor has been identified by their Aboriginal-controlled Boards as critical parts of their cultural landscape.

Compartments 2004 and 2005 (of over 400 hectares) are right on the north-western edge of Bermagui and drain into the Bermagui River very close to the harbour. Experience of past logging in regional catchments tells us that this logging will quickly silt up the Bermagui River, damaging boating, fishing, and oyster leases and harbour access, as it has silted up the other waterways in the region.

Bermagui, Murrah and Mumbulla State Forests are at the northern end of what has just been declared the Wilderness Coast in a major new tourism initiative. People live, work and visit here for the natural beauty of the region, for fishing,

golf, bushwalking and other recreation, for surfing and snorkelling, for events provided by a thriving arts community.

The Bermagui-Tathra demographic has changed: Bermagui's population, for example, has grown by 30% this decade. New arrivals put more store on protecting the environment and responding to climate change. They are establishing new industries. Degraded forests and waterways and lost tourist industries on which the region relies are the last things this region wants or needs.

The Regional Forest Agreement arrangements that apply to logging were set in 1998, were not reviewed in 2003 as required, and have still not been reviewed. They take no account of new public and government concerns regarding climate change and water or impacts on other industries. They are out of date, have not achieved their environmental goals, have failed to ensure sustainable yields, and should be cancelled immediately.

The latest scientific research shows that Governments have seriously underestimated the contribution native forests can make both to mitigating and to adapting to climate change.

NSW needs new forest policies that reduce the impact of climate change. It needs to get out of native forest logging - conducted at a loss to NSW taxpayers - and concentrate on the plantation and plantation-based processing sectors that are the economic and jobs growth future for the timber industry in this region.

Stopping logging of Bermagui, Murrah, Tanja and Mumbulla State Forests is a good place to start putting in place the seismic shifts in policy the Premier has promised.



Cuttagee Lake:
we don't want this fate for the Bermagui River