

# **APPLICATION TO HARVEST AND EXPORT NATIVE WILDLIFE**

## **Title and Introduction**

Scientific name: *Dicksonia antarctica*

Common name: Soft Tree fern

### Location of Harvest:

The Otway Ranges in southern Victoria.

### Description:

*Dicksonia antarctica* is a plant that has a fibrous trunk. Plants ranging in size from 15cm to 240 cm in trunk height. Diameters 15cm – 40cm. Fronds are broad and rolling with a smooth and shiny appearance. Tree Ferns can grow to a height of 15 metres. Whole live plants are harvested from 15cm to 240 cm in height.

### Protection:

*Dicksonia antarctica* is a protected species that requires a permit to harvest under the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* of 1988\ and a permit to export under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

## **Statement of General Goals and Aims**

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

## **Harvest Details**

### Area of Harvesting:

The softwood plantations are situated in the Otway Ranges in southern Victoria. The approx size is 3500 hectares.

### Details of land Ownership:

The land is a Softwood plantation that is logged on a regular basis. Harvesting of tree ferns can only be undertaken from within the plantation planted area. Tree fern harvesting operations are excluded from code exclusion areas and sections of filter strips as identified as reserve areas. Tree fern harvesting is excluded from streamside reserves and drainage lines. No disturbance is to occur within these areas and no entry of machinery is allowed. Only certain coupes are available for harvesting each year. Please find details of ownership and copies of relevant permits attached. (See Attachments 3&4).

### Quantity of Harvesting:

Allocation of 35,000 whole live plants would be initially requested for export movement each year. This will be measured by tags issued from the Victorian 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 is a commercial operation; there is minimal impact on the habitat from our harvesting operations. All staff is fully trained in the use of the equipment and holds relative licences and complies with relative work safe practices.

#### Timing and Duration of Harvesting Period:

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

### **Impact of Harvest on the Taxa and the Relevant ecosystem**

#### Effects on the Species and Other Species:

Effects on harvesting on the species shall have minimal impact as only salvage 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.

### **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 each year for this harvesting site. Each year a report to the Department of the Environment and water Resources Annual report for Wildlife Trade Operation is completed by us on the amount of plants harvested with the amount that are exported and what is local distribution.

#### 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* .

#### Monitoring of Harvest:

No monitoring of harvest is required as it is a salvage operation from a commercial timber harvesting activity.

#### Further Monitoring:

There is no further monitoring proposed at this stage to this harvesting site.

#### Management strategies:

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

Compliance:

Restrictions on harvest and sale are controlled under the Victorian *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.( see attachment 5)

Reports:

An annual report is required by Department of the Environment and water Resources (Annual report for Wildlife Trade Operation) stating the number of tree ferns harvested and the number exported. Department of Sustainability and Environment Victoria issue numbered tags which are attached to each plant as soon as possible after harvesting. This enables numbers to be accurately recorded.

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.

References (see attachment 6.)