Submission form
Tasmania’s Special Species Management Plan

Your details

First name  Brian

Last name  Ridler

Organisation (if applicable)  Woodcraft Guild Tasmania Inc.

Please tick one of the following

☑️ I confirm that my completed submission does not contain sensitive information and can be published in full on the Department of State Growth website.

☐ My completed submission should NOT be published on the Department of State Growth website.

Privacy Notice

You are providing personal information to the Tasmanian Department of State Growth (the Department), which will manage that information in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Act 2004. The personal information collected here will be used by the Department for the purpose of receiving and verifying contact details for stakeholders who have chosen to provide a submission. Failure to provide this information may result in the non-acceptance of your submission or records not being properly maintained.

Copyright in completed submissions resides with the author(s), not with the Department.

In providing a submission, you agree that:

- unless you indicate otherwise below (or as otherwise determined by the Department), your submission will be published on the Department’s website and will remain on the Department’s website indefinitely
- the Department may contact you about your submission
- for published submissions from individuals, your name will be published with your submission. All other contact details will be removed from the submission
- for published submissions from organisations, your name and your organisation’s details will be published with your submission.
Introduction: About the Guild:

The Woodcraft Guild Tasmania Inc. (the Guild) was formed in 1986. It is based in Hobart and is one of three associations in Tasmania known as Guilds. The other two are the Tamar Woodworkers Guild and the North West Woodworkers Guild.

The Guild currently has around 50 paid-up members. The Guild is entirely self-funding, and raises money through membership subscriptions and the sale of products at regular events such as the Hobart Show and the Australian Wooden Boat Festival, particularly model wooden boats and planes, where young children are assisted in assembling them from pre-made components in the hope that an enjoyable activity sparks interest in the manual arts as well as giving them a value-for-money toy to take home.

The Guild’s home base is a secure room within the Cosgrove Learning Centre in Derwent Park, where it has a comprehensive workshop stocked with tools and equipment purchased by the Guild, a computer-equipped office space and a comprehensive library stocked with books, magazines and videos.

The Guild holds regular meetings on the second Tuesday evening of each month except January, and its Committee meets monthly. The Guild runs Special Interest Group meetings on lidded box making and wood turning on a monthly basis, as well as regular workshop access events, occasional field trips and exhibitions of members’ work.

The Guild recently purchased a defibrillator to be located in the workshop, and hosted a presentation by three demonstrators from St John Ambulance at one of its general meetings.

While it has a regard for all timbers, the Guild and its members have always had a deep affection for our Tasmanian Special Species Timbers, (SST), especially those that grow nowhere else. The Guild has a policy of neutrality and avoidance of engagement in debate of political matters.

Species to which the Plan applies:

The Guild generally agrees with the species list to which the plan applies, but would like to suggest that Horizontal Scrub be considered for inclusion by regulation.

The Guild questions whether Silver Wattle needs to be included in the list, as it is not aware of widespread use by craft practitioners, and would not like to see other commercial opportunities stifled by its inclusion, especially as it is not slow-growing and is widespread throughout the state, sufficiently to ensure that it is not likely to become threatened or endangered if new markets emerge, and the normal course of the Forest Practices Code is applied.

The Guild would ultimately like to see some promotion of the qualities of the more rare examples of endemic Tasmanian timbers, especially in relation to density, stability, colour, oil content, aroma, and potential uses.

Some timbers are very light in colour, almost white, whereas others are very dark, and in work like marquetry or intarsia they can be very useful. Others are very dense and oily, and can be very hard-wearing, which can be very useful in some circumstances, for example in mechanical components, such as in wooden clocks or propeller shaft bearings in wooden boats. Others are very stable, and are excellent in certain applications, such as in gears in wooden clocks. See image:
Land to which the Plan applies:

The Guild is disappointed to note the loss of so much of the STMU’s (Special Timbers Management Units) since the signing of the original RFA (Regional Forest Agreement) in 1997. Just over 75% of the original 143,000 hectares has been lost to availability, and we believe for no valid reason, as the management prescriptions for those areas have always been more gentle.

The Guild understands and supports the delineation of the land to which the Plan applies, but encourages the principles behind the management of SST (Special Species Timbers) to be applied outside of those areas where possible, especially where they occur in the PTPZ, (Permanent Timber Production Zone), to any significant level of concentration.

We encourage the value and the opportunity cost of the loss of semi-mature SST to be measured against the return of harvesting available High Quality Eucalypt saw log in the PTPZ by conventional means, and ask that alternative means such as selective logging be applied where possible.

The Guild would support extension of Sustainable Timber Tasmania’s FMU into other suitable parts of the FPPF Lands to make up for any shortfall of HQ Eucalypt saw log if it was to result in a more favourable overall outcome for SST.

Management of values:

The management values for all aspects resource management, timber harvesting and processing are well in place, but the significance, descriptions and definitions of the cultural heritage, historical significance, economic and social importance as well as future employment potential of the use of our magnificent Special Timbers is less well researched, recorded or communicated. We hope that improvements will occur in this area, but it is a shared responsibility that requires more effort from other areas of government, as well as from practitioners ourselves.

We are aware that as well as having a Convention on World Heritage Areas in the physical sense, UNESCO and the United Nations has a Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage, and ourselves and others recognize that we may have a case for suggesting that many aspects of the use and application of our unique Special Timbers would qualify for consideration under that Convention, even though Australia as a State Party is not yet a signatory to that Convention.
Established Supply:

We recognize that much good work has been done in assessing the extent of the resource, and point out that assessing what is standing in the reserves (that cannot be touched) is also important for establishing that the volume available from which annual harvest can be drawn is important for verifying that no species is in danger or threatened by the harvesting that will occur.

The real available resource available to the SST industry will only become apparent when harvest operations are approved and conducted and demonstrate the real log volumes, quality and log costs generated from partial harvesting options. We suspect these real, practical volumes will unfortunately be much less than the 'blue sky' maximum resource numbers discussed in the Draft Plan. The management actions discussed in section 10 of the draft, (to be conducted after the plan is approved) will generate better SST resource numbers, which would normally be included in a Draft Plan for discussion.

Harvest Techniques:

We note and approve that the recommended harvest prescription is for partial harvesting, as defined in the Plan and the Forest Practices Code. However, we remain interested to understand what this will translate into in terms of cost per unit of volume delivered to customers and subsequent processors, including the few remaining SST saw millers. We note the material that is proximate to existing road networks, but remain concerned about road maintenance and extension costs into the future, and recognize that this has implications for other special interest groups, such as bee keepers.

We are interested to observe and explore how new and innovative harvesting methods may be brought to bear, and whether contractors will be able to step up under the plan using smaller, lighter and more agile equipment that has a lower capital cost, and whether they can deliver SST material which is still affordable, although we realize it is likely to be more expensive than we have previously known or anticipated.

Guild members have traditionally been able to negotiate access to post-harvest forestry areas for SST salvage, including for Horizontal Scrub and material suitable for wood turning, sculpting, and craft applications, and we acknowledge the friendly and helpful assistance of officers from (formerly) Forestry Tasmania, many now retired or made redundant. They identified suitable areas, unlocked gates, and escorted us in, checking that we had suitable Personal Protective Equipment, chainsaw operator’s licenses, and checked that we understood what we could and could not do. We hope that similar opportunities will continue to be available to us in the future, under the provisions of the Plan. See the following images of previous such Horizontal Scrub gathering trips into the Southern Forests:
Land owner approvals:

Conservation Areas and Regional Reserves are included as a resource but the approval conditions for land managed by DPIPWE offer many opportunities to block any harvest of SST material. Unless strong Government direction is provided to support access for SST production we fear much of this resource may effectively be unavailable. We need reliable assurances that this will not be the case.

It would be greatly helpful if the landowner approval process could be significantly streamlined from what it currently appears will be the case.