



# We are continuing to improve our regeneration burning program

Bob Gordon, Managing Director

Last year, we implemented some changes in our regeneration burning program.

These changes saw a significant improvement in our smoke management and a reduction in the number of smoke complaints.

This year, we are again aiming to ensure that none of our burns cause a breach of the national air quality standard.

## How we will meet the target.

We will:

- voluntarily declare days with poor smoke dispersal conditions to be 'no burn days';
- start the regeneration program earlier (if conditions are suitable), which we hope will increase the number of days on which we can burn and so reduce the number of burns on any one day; and
- continue to adhere to the Forest Practices Authority's advice on how much smoke may be produced in any airshed on any day.

## How we will let the community know what's happening.

We will:

- continue to upload daily information about the location of the burns we hope to undertake to the forest industry planned burning website at <http://www.plannedburnstas.com.au/>;
- issue morning media advisories before commencing burns;
- issue evening media advisories containing appraisals of the smoke arising from the days' burns.

## If we didn't need to burn, we wouldn't.

Regeneration burns are essential to ensuring harvested areas in wet eucalypt forests will regrow.

Eucalypt forests are fire-adapted ecosystems. To germinate and grow, eucalypt seeds need a mineral soil and/or ash seedbed, abundant sunlight and reduced competition from other plants. In the natural cycle, these conditions most commonly occur following a wildfire.



Regeneration burns provide similar growing conditions, allowing the eucalypt trees to be regenerated on harvested areas of forest.

If we didn't burn after harvesting in wet eucalypt forest, the forest would not regrow with the same species composition as present before harvesting.

## How do we consider where and when to burn?

Before we conduct any burn, our planners consider:

- prevailing and forecast weather conditions;
- Bureau of Meteorology atmospheric stability modelling (important for determining smoke dispersal);
- moisture levels in the harvested coupe and surrounding forest (important for determining fire intensity and ensuring worker safety);
- how to minimise smoke production; and
- likely effects on towns and events downwind of the proposed burn.



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## Do regeneration burns contribute to carbon emissions?

Tasmania's state forests absorb and store three times more carbon each year than is emitted by FT's regeneration burns.

Each year, our growing forests absorb about six million tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

## When will the regeneration burns start?

In past years, 15 March was the usual start date for regeneration burns. Now, if conditions are suitable, we will commence regeneration burns earlier, with the intention of extending the season and reducing the number of burns on any one day.

## Why do regeneration burns take place in autumn?

The stable weather conditions and the approaching winter rains make it the safest time to do so.

## What happens after the burns?

Unlike the understorey species (blackwood, silver wattle and dogwood etc) eucalypt seeds do not persist in the soil awaiting an opportunity to germinate. So, within days of the burn being completed locally collected eucalypt seeds are sown from a helicopter at a rate of approximately 62,500 seeds per hectare or 6 seeds per square metre. The seeds germinate within weeks and at the same time the understorey species seeds present in the soil also begin to germinate. The regrowth forest will eventually be similar to the harvested one.

Thanks to our comprehensive reserve system, our landscape includes a healthy mosaic of old growth and regrowth forests.

## Are there any alternatives to burning?

Under our Forestry Innovation Plan, we have identified a number of opportunities to use waste wood as a source of renewable energy, rather than leaving it on the forest floor to be burnt.

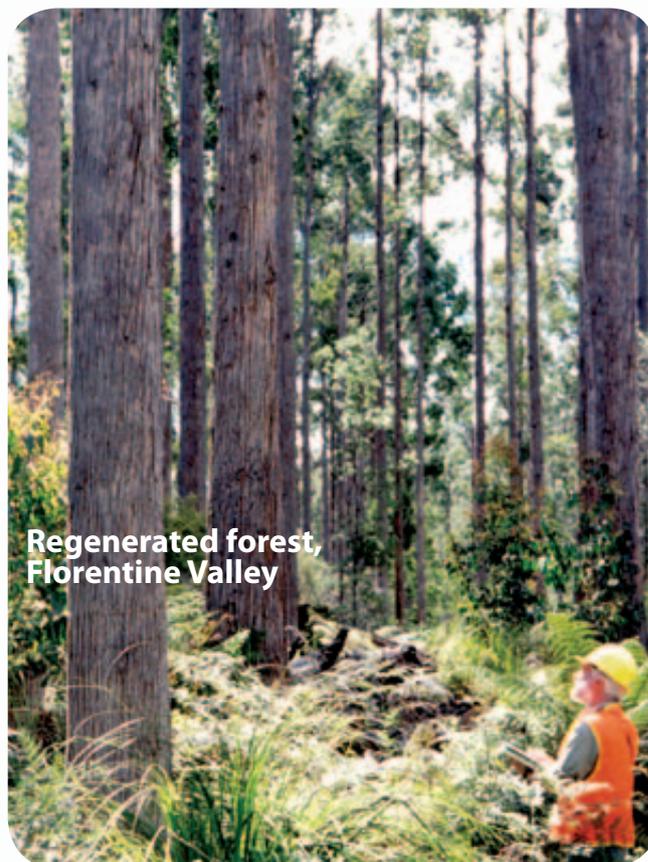
For example, the development of a biomass fuelled power station in the Huon Valley could see these residues used to produce enough green power for all the homes south of Hobart, while reducing smoke emissions from high intensity burns by up to 70 per cent.

However, some burning will always be required to ensure effective regeneration in native forests.

## How can other land managers help improve air quality this autumn?

Forestry Tasmania and the Parks and Wildlife Service undertake burning during autumn using sophisticated meteorological models and data to minimise the effects of smoke on the community.

Unfortunately, other landholders generally do not use these techniques, but they can help maintain air quality by implementing some common sense precautions, such as not burning damp or green vegetation, and not lighting fires under still conditions when it is evident that smoke dispersal will be poor.



Regenerated forest,  
Florentine Valley

## Upcoming forestry talk

A forestry talk is scheduled for 1 pm, February 22, 2012  
Forestry Tasmania, 79 Melville St, Hobart .

### **Fire and regeneration in wet forests: an evolving story**

Robyn Scott (Research Officer, Forestry Tasmania)

Robyn will explain how new slow burning methods are allowing good forest regeneration when alternatives to clearfelling are employed.

## Contact your local forestry district for more information

Bass District	(03) 6350 6466
Murchison District	(03) 6433 2666
Derwent District	(03) 6235 8353
Huon District	(03) 6295 7111



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