

OPTIONS FOR THE BRIGALOW BELT SOUTH BIOREGION

The NSW Government invites you to comment on options for the future management of public land in the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion.

Following completion of the assessments in June, the information and data was compiled and stakeholders – government agencies and community representatives – got together during September to look at land management options for the region.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Resource and Conservation Assessment Council (RACAC) established an open and inclusive process in which stakeholders participated during the assessment period and in the development of options. Regional groups represented on RACAC include farmers, environmental groups, the timber industry, the mining industry, the union and the Aboriginal community.

Regional stakeholders are also represented in the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion (BBSB) Assessment. A number of nominated stakeholder technical representatives provided technical input into projects and comment on data and reports. Regional groups have also been invited to advise RACAC on a range of critical natural resource issues in the region (such as private land conservation). This has been facilitated through a series of workshops, attended by representatives of over 30 groups and organisations, which have been held in the region since August 2000.

Through these workshops, representatives have been identifying what they think are the most important issues that need to be addressed through the assessment.

By involving the community in this way it means that, in addition to the usual consultation mechanisms – in which the community has the chance to comment on government proposals – stakeholders have actually participated in the development of those options.

This information kit includes proposals by Aboriginal stakeholders as well as a range of options including those developed by the Brigalow Region United Stakeholders and the Western Conservation Alliance.

DEVELOPING OPTIONS FOR THE BRIGALOW BELT SOUTH BIOREGION

In developing the options a range of environmental indicators including vegetation communities, rare / endangered vegetation communities, vulnerable high quality habitat, fauna and flora information as well as cultural heritage information was considered. These values were then applied to different options, taking into consideration varying timber supply and mineral potential situations. Each option contains different configurations of comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) reserve types to allow for varying levels of economic activity in relation to forest industry and mining and energy implications.

Community representatives have developed a range of values, criteria, goals and indicators against which future management and land use in the region are now evaluated.

The options outlined in this kit describe various reserve designs while providing a range of wood volumes available from State forests.

Figures indicating potential job gains or losses are estimates only, and have been supplied by agencies and organisations involved in the assessment. These figures have been included at the request of community representatives.

The effects of these options on environmental and heritage values and economic and social issues (including mineral potential) are also outlined.

No option represents any preferred position of the NSW Government.

A reserve system can include dedicated formal reserves (e.g. national parks, nature reserves, flora reserves and Aboriginal areas), informal reserves (such as Forest Management Zones and state conservation areas) and areas managed for conservation by prescription under NSW Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (see section on ESFM).

All the proposed reserve designs could be readily implemented as they take into account considerations such as leasehold lands, areas under Aboriginal land claims in relation to the NSW Native Title Act 1994 and areas of high mineral potential.

Wilderness assessments in the bioregion under the New South Wales *Wilderness Act 1987* have been undertaken by the National Parks and Wildlife Service for the Pilliga, Mt Kaputar and Bebo assessment areas. In total, about 164,000 hectares are provisionally identified wilderness and are in addition to the 30,141 ha of declared wilderness in the Western Regional Assessment area. New South Wales Government decisions on wilderness declaration will occur under the provisions of the *Wilderness Act 1987*.

Following completion of the exhibition period, community submissions will be reviewed and taken into account before providing recommendations to Government.

Following a decision on these options, a forest agreement will be prepared by the Government in 2003, taking into account recommendations and comments from the public exhibition period.

There will also be further discussions between agencies and consultation with key stakeholders (at present proposed to be carried out through the stakeholder technical representatives) on the development of a set of Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management

(ESFM) criteria and indicators applicable to the region, that will be contained within the forest agreement when finalised.

ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

The NSW *Forestry and National Park Estate Act 1998* forms the principal framework for managing New South Wales forests. The act enables the making of forest agreements and the granting of integrated forestry operations approvals (IFOAs) for the operational aspects of timber harvesting. Key provisions that must be contained within a forest agreement are those that will assist in the achievement of ecologically sustainable forest management (ESFM).

ESFM covers a wide range of forest values. The importance of each value will vary locally and thus relate to an agreed management goal for a particular area of forest. Emphasis will vary from conservation, multiple uses, to intensive timber production.

To achieve ESFM it is important to identify an acceptable balance between the environmental, social and economic values of the region. One of the greatest challenges for the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion is to allocate land use and develop management practices for the full range of forest values according to ongoing community expectations on public and private land. This requires a management system that incorporates a set of criteria and indicators that are used to guide and assess management planning and practices, and will provide transparency in the direction and results of forest management.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Project reports prepared for the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion are available at exhibition sites and can be viewed on the Internet with other background material at www.racac.nsw.gov.au

Information Sessions

If you want to discuss these options, or find out more about how to have your say, come to one of the information sessions:

DATE Wednesday 9 October
TIME: 9am – 1pm
LOCATION: Moree RSL Club

DATE: Wednesday 9 October
TIME: 3pm – 7pm
LOCATION: Narrabri Bowling Club

DATE: Thursday 10 October
TIME: 2pm – 6pm
LOCATION: Baradine Ex-Services Club

DATE: Friday 11 October
TIME: 9am – 1pm
LOCATION: Gilgandra Council

DATE: Friday 11 October
TIME: 2pm – 6pm
LOCATION: Dubbo RSL Club

More copies of this information kit are available through PlanningNSW and agency offices in the region listed on the next page:

Copies of this information kit are available through PlanningNSW and agency offices in the region:

PlanningNSW

- Henry Deane Building, 20 Lee Street, SYDNEY ph: 02 9762 8044
- 32 Erskine St DUBBO ph: 02 6885 3200

National Parks and Wildlife Service

- 48-52 Wingewarra St DUBBO
- 30 Timor St COONABARABRAN
- 1/100 Maitland St NARRABRI

State Forests of NSW

- cnr Monash and Chelmsford Sts DUBBO
- cnr Lachlan and Darling Sts BARADINE
- Warialda Rd INVERELL

Department of Land and Water Conservation

- 209 Cobra St DUBBO
- 56 Cassilis St COONABARABRAN
- Warren Rd GILGANDRA
- 66-68 Frome St MOREE
- 47 Hope St WARIALDA
- 53 Maitland St NARRABRI

If you have any further queries please contact PlanningNSW in Sydney (ph: 02 9762 8044) or at Dubbo (ph 02 6885 3200).

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

Your views are invited on the options presented here. The NSW Government will take into account submissions received during this consultation phase before making a final decision on the future of the public forests of the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion.

You can send submissions to:

Resource and Conservation Division
PlanningNSW
GPO Box 3927
SYDNEY NSW 2001.

Submissions close on Friday 25 October 2002.