

This submission on the RFA's consultation paper from our community, the Glen Valley and Friends Community Action Group, is dealing with our specific area of concern in the State forest – Glen Wills Creek water catchment, as many of the issues raised in the paper are exactly what we have been raising with various government departments and politicians since 1999

The Glen Valley and Friends CAG is made up of residents, land owners and frequent visitors to the community. The ones who are listed at the end of the submission are those who rely on Glen Wills Creek for water, either for stock and domestic or fire fighting purposes. Our properties are all within a couple of kilometres of the proposed logging coupes in our water catchments. No other community in the state has the threat of logging so close to its water supply. Most catchments are protected by very large buffers.

In 1999, a 35 hectare coupe in the Glen Wills Creek water catchment was proposed under the wood utilisation plan by the Dept. of Natural Resources and Environment. After some letters of concern to the NRE and various politicians this coupe was withdrawn and commitment was made that the NRE would consult directly regarding local concerns should the issue arise again.

In 2001 submissions to the NRE for the proposed Gippsland Forest management plan were made with regard to water supply and biodiversity in the Glen Wills Creek water catchment, suggesting that a small area be added to the adjacent reserve. The submissions were acknowledged and the issues raised would be considered in the final management plan, but the status on Glen Wills Creek did not change on release of this plan.

In January 2003 bushfires swept through our valley and brought home to us just how important the water supply from Glen Wills Creek is. All but two houses were saved by residents and fire-fighters using water from Glen Wills Creek. The two houses lost were unattended.

In 2009 several coupes in the Glen Wills Creek catchment were listed under the timber release plan by Vic Forests and approved by the Department of Sustainability and Environment. No direct consultation regarding local concerns happened prior to the listing. An obvious oversight considering interdepartmental changes and changes in government.

Since 2009 many submissions from our community regarding our water catchment and timber harvesting have been made to Vic Forest, DELWP and politicians. Also a couple of community consultation meetings have taken place locally. The water in Glen Wills Creek is tested extensively on a regular basis and has proved to be of pristine quality and fit for human consumption without treatment. Our primary concern is just one listed coupe (749-509-0006). This is located at the head of the main tributary of Glen Wills Creek. The south west corner is 200-300m from the water pickup point for Glen Wills (Guest house and residence). One and half kilometres downstream, Glen Valley residents start accessing the creek for their water supply.

Section 4.1.2 of the consultation paper (Conserve forest biodiversity and maintain ecosystem health) – As this coupe is located within a very large area of timber harvesting. Leaving this one coupe out would go a long way to achieving this in this section of the forest.

Likewise saving this coupe will 'recognise the other values' (4.1.1) in this section of forest and for the community downstream. All other values are gone post-harvest. Rehabilitation and soil stabilization may take years to kick in, especially if bulldozers have to be sent back in for mechanical disturbance

due to poor seed germination first time around. The ground will inevitably be infested to some degree by weeds and this will have a flow on affect to us downstream. English Broom is of great concern. If the weeds are bad enough then herbicides will have to be used where previously none have. Water flow will also be compromised. Initially high flow and increased turbidity during downpours and low to no flow in hot dry summers will be the norm for years to come. It is daunting to us all to think of facing another bushfire without water in the creek.

Considering the tourism and recreation value, this coupe is the most visible in this area. Having a very long road frontage and it is also in full view of all walkers traversing from Mt. Wills to Sunnyside on the Australian Alpine Walking Track.

Not mentioned in the consultation paper is the value of community health. We have had the threat of degrading our water supply hanging over our heads for more than 10 years. It will be very insulting to us if the harvest of 749-509-0006 goes ahead despite all the years of consultation. We would have been better treated if the harvest happened 10 years ago without any consultation. This one coupe will not make or break the timber industry but the effects of its harvest will be felt by the community for the remainder of the current resident's lifetime. Just this last summer the news has highlighted the effects of the lack of clean water has on communities. The value of that piece of forest is far greater to the community that live adjacent to it, than the short term value is to the timber industry and workers who live far away.

As a community we will believe and accept that the RFA's, DELWP and Vic Forests are taking community consultation seriously (3.3.6) when coupe 794-509-0006 is removed from the TRP and it is agreed no more coupes are to be added in the Glen Wills Creek water catchment. As an act of compromise, we have withdrawn our objection from all other currently listed coupes in our water catchment.

Sincerely,

Glen Valley and Friends Community Action Group

Members using Glen Wills Creek:

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Appendix A: Photos showing logging coupes in our vicinity post-harvest









Minister for Major Projects and Tourism

File: 10-3-33
Ref: MP99/279
MP: 000279

30 DEC 1999

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your correspondence regarding the proposed logging coupe adjacent to Glen Wills, and your recent correspondence informing me that this coupe has been withdrawn from the current Wood Utilisation Plan which expires in the year 2002.

I have been advised by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment that the logging coupe has been withdrawn, due to the direct impact this would have on your business and other interests.

The Department would like to consider approaches which would maintain and have minimal impact on the landscape value. This area is still zoned for timber production, however local concerns will be taken into account, and should the issue arise again, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment will consult with you directly.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
JOHN PANDAZOPOULOS MP
Minister for Major Projects and Tourism



Minister for Environment and Conservation

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

28 JAN 2000

DEC 16 2000

Dear [Redacted]

Proposed Logging Coupe 12/684/511/01, Glen Wills

Thank you for your letter of 18 November 1999 regarding your's and other submissions made in response to the advertised amendments to the 1999/2000 – 2001/2002 North East Forest Management Area (FMA) Wood Utilisation Plan (WUP).

As a result of the submissions received, coupe 12/684/511/01 has been removed from the current WUP. I understand that the Senior Forester, North East FMA has already advised all people who made submissions of this decision.

Future plans for harvesting in this area will only proceed after careful consideration of local landscape and tourism values. Public comment on these plans will be sought and I would welcome your continuing participation in forest planning processes.

Yours sincerely,
[Redacted]

Sherry Garbut MP
Minister for Environment and Conservation

FIRE

It was a never to be forgotten day. After days of preparation, the fire finally reached us on 21st January, 2003. Firebreaks had been bulldozed around the town of Glen Valley, but the fire took no notice at all of them, the creek, or the highway, which it jumped with ease.

Most of the residents had prepared to defend their properties, ourselves included. We had kept the area surrounding the house green and well-watered from Glen Wills Creek.

As the fire came across the paddock towards us, we wet down the house and as much as we could, with garden hoses, on the western side of the property where the fire approached. My plan was to stay inside while my husband and son fought the fire, but it turned out I was needed much more outside.

Not far from the house fence a sudden wind change took the fire to the bush 200 metres behind the house. Once it had really caught on fire, another wind change caused the fire to rush down the wooded gully on the eastern side of the house, and straight towards us from the back paddock. We felt helpless with a couple of garden hoses at that stage.

Enter the C.F.A. They turned up at the crucial moment, after saving houses further down the road. They prevented the flames from entering our block, and stopped them from reaching the tops of the large gum trees in the gully. When their water tank was empty, they were able to refill quickly from nearby Glen Wills Creek.

The result was that our house was saved and most of the others in the valley were also. Now, if

there had been no water in Glen Wills Creek, the story would certainly have been very different.

Despite everyone's best attempts, I watched helplessly as ~~the~~ ^{our absent neighbour's} house ~~next door~~ exploded at about 11pm that night. That would have been the result of many houses in the valley, including ours I believe, if there had been no water in Glen Wills Creek.

Yes, you could say that we saved our house, you could say the C.F.A. saved our house. But if there had been no water in Glen Wills Creek, nobody would have had a chance. Several of the larger landowners had slip-on units with firefighting pumps. We have ~~now~~ invested in one of these since the fire. They were able to save much of their property with these, but once again, without water, they may have lost all their property and livestock.

There were no handouts afterwards, as there were in the recent bushfires near Melbourne. There was no support. No-one came up afterwards to ask how people were going. Community members just got on with the job, replacing fences, sheds etc. And all were most thankful for Glen Wills Creek that day.

Appendix E: Recent correspondence from Vic Forests – Letter sent to residents



14 February 2018



Thank you for your submission as part of the December 2017 - January 2018 Timber Release Plan (TRP) Proposed Changes – Community Consultation.

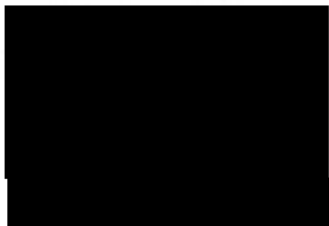
Your submission has raised an issue or issues that require further investigation by VicForests. We will respond or contact you regarding your submission in the near future. Once again, thank you for your input into our TRP planning process.

Timber harvest occurs following a lengthy multi-layered planning process that considers the management of the many environmental and other values present in the forest. The vast majority of Victoria's native forests will never be harvested. Victoria has a truly world class forest parks and reserve system that covers an area the size of Tasmania.

Where an area of State forest has been identified as being suitable for timber harvest, the TRP process ensures that VicForests informs stakeholders of its proposed timber harvest plans. It provides the first opportunity for many stakeholders to identify coupe specific values that may not have already been identified by VicForests.

If you would like to discuss any of your concerns with VicForests staff, then please contact myself or [redacted]

Yours sincerely,



Appendix F: Map showing Glen Wills/Glen Valley and some of the logging coupes in our vicinity including 749-509-0006

