

APPLICATION TO HARVEST AND EXPORT NATIVE WILDLIFE

Title and Introduction

This application is for a Wildlife Trade Operation under the category of Small scale operation. The wild harvest operation will be pine plantations on private land which the tree ferns will be collected prior to tree harvesting.

Scientific name: Dicksonia antarctica

Common name: Soft Tree fern

Location of Harvest:

Otway Ranges in southern Victoria. Colac Otway shire.

Description:

Dicksonia antarctica is a plant that has a fibrous trunk. Plants range 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 meters. 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:

Otway Ranges in southern Victoria in the Colac Otway Shire.

Details of Land Ownership:

Private Property.

Harvest Quantity:

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 and a small tractor are used to remove the ferns. There is minimal impact on the habitat from our harvesting operations. All staff is fully trained in the use of the equipment and hold relative licenses.

Timing and Duration of Harvesting Period:

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

Impact of Harvest on the Taxa and the Relevant Ecosystem

Effects on the Species and Other Species:

Effects of 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. Each year a report to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC) 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 the 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.

Reports:

An annual report is required by DSEWPaC (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:

Department of Natural Resources and Environment(DNRE), 2002
Victorian Tree Fern Management Plan.

