

SAVEYOURLEATHERWOODHONEY ASS. INC

REPORT TO MEMBERS – MARCH 2011

For those of you who are members of the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association (TBA), some of this report will be familiar, parts of it having appeared in previous issues of the TBA monthly Newsletter.

Apart from assisting with TBA publicity, in particular the Beekeeping Industry presentation at the Hobart Show and the preparation of a submission to the National Heritage Council regarding the proposal to have the Tarkine placed on the National Heritage Register, our focus in the Association for the last 6 months has been fivefold:

1. Monitoring the operation of the Wedge Agreement (Derwent District).
2. Commencing negotiations for a Community Forest Agreement for the Huon District.
3. Exploring with Forestry Tasmania how mature leatherwood in the remainder of the Derwent District can be preserved, (Florentine, Styx, Counsel and Tiger Blocks).
4. With the relevant beekeepers, assessing coupes in the current 3 year plan in the Huon District, and making submissions to Forestry Tasmania to retain the mature leatherwood trees.
5. Assisting the TBA in having a voice in the discussions around what constitutes High Conservation Forest for the purpose of both the Timber Harvesting Moratorium and the final outcome of the Round Table discussions being facilitated by Bill Kelty.

I deal with the above in detail as follows:

1. Our monitoring of the harvesting activities in the Wedge Block shows that up to date the Agreement is being adhered to. Post harvesting and post burn inspections show that a high percentage of leatherwood is being retained. Areas of mature leatherwood not previously identified or mapped have been discovered and more than 50ha has been added to the leatherwood mapping (no harvesting allowed), in the Wedge. Timber harvesting has all but ceased in this Block with only two coupes scheduled for this year. These coupes contain little or no leatherwood. The coupe boundaries for these coupes have also been considered with a view to avoiding the destruction of what mature leatherwood trees remain.
2. Inspection of Blocks in the Derwent District other than the Wedge, and the assessment of coupes which are to be harvested in those Blocks for the effect on mature leatherwood stands is continuing. In those Blocks negotiations for the application of leatherwood retention harvesting methods has begun. This is intended to include early involvement of the beekeepers in the preparation of the 3 Year Plan and Forest Practices Plans with a view to negotiating adjustments to coupe boundaries. This has

now commenced in the Florentine Valley (Counsel) Block and is soon to extend to the Styx, Tyenna and Tiger Blocks.

3. We have prepared a preliminary submission to Forestry Tasmania (based on our experience in the Wedge Block), directed at the conclusion of a Community Forest Agreement for the whole of the Huon District (450000ha). This submission is substantial and has taken some 6 months to put together. Part of this process has involved media interviews with Southern Beekeepers in the Southern Forest, including a program on ABC TV. While not seeking confrontation we will continue to use the media whenever we believe this will help lead to meaningful negotiations with Forestry Tasmania.
4. We are assisting the Southern Beekeepers with the assessment of the 3 Year Plan for the Huon District so as to put together a submission to Forestry Tasmania for coupe boundary adjustments and coupe removal from the Plan where the harvesting will impact adversely on the leatherwood resource and on the site hive carrying capacities. Until there is a Community Forest Agreement for the Huon District this process of coupe by coupe assessment followed by coupe by coupe submissions will continue as it did in the Wedge Block before the Community Forest Agreement for that Block was concluded.
5. Discussions have been in place for some months with the participants of the Forest Agreement Principals to obtain a voice for beekeepers in the decision as to what constitutes high Conservation Forest. This process is also to enable beekeepers to have early information as to what leatherwood rich forest is to be inside or outside any area permanently set aside as reserve if a Forest Agreement is concluded. We have just made initial contact with Mr Bill Kelty through his liaison officer/assistant, and are waiting a reply as to how, if at all, he will include the beekeepers in any future discussions. It should be remembered that the initial request by the TBA to be included in the Round Table discussions was refused by the Minister.

All of the above is a dynamic process requiring hard work, vigilance and support from all of our members. I thank all of our members for their loyal support. On that subject I am pleased to note that our membership is growing and we have just received our first membership application from the USA.

Bob Davey (President).