

REPORT OF THE SAVEYOURLEATHERWOODHONEY ASSOCIATION FOR MARCH AND APRIL 2008

Since our last report in February we have confirmed that the two coupes referred to and being in the Wedge District have been harvested with no preservation of their leatherwood content.

The third coupe WE039D, (wrongly referred to as WE039F in the last report), is being clearfelled by cable harvesting as this is being written. However the offer to attend an on site inspection with a planner from Forestry Tasmania was accepted. The inspection took place on the 9th April in the company of the Regional Planner and a Cable Harvesting Planner. John Duncombe and I were taken over most of the coupe.

The net result was that after a 4 hour tour in very steep rough old growth forest a substantial stand of leatherwood was identified inside the coupe boundary adjacent to one of the boundaries. Both the Regional Planner and the Southern TBA have made a submission to the Regional Manager for an adjustment to be made to the coupe boundary to retain the resource. The stand is critical to the viability of John`s hive sites in the area. He has sites marginally supporting about 50 hives in an area where once 100 hives were comfortably supported. The stand of leatherwood was not referred to on the original timber harvesting plan and the planners appeared surprised at its existence.

At least as important from a beekeeping point of view was the very frank exchange of information between both sides with a lot of questions being put by the planners who took detailed notes. The main result of the discussions was a recognition of the need to have beekeepers involved at a much earlier stage of the planning process than is currently the case. The point was made that Forestry Tasmania planners would benefit greatly from early input by the beekeepers so as to avoid the " catch up " reviewing of coupes currently occurring. It goes without saying that early involvement in the planning process will benefit beekeepers by allowing them to assess leatherwood content and make early submissions to Forestry Tasmania for its retention.

There appeared to be genuine goodwill on the part of the planners who came clearly briefed to deal with both the coupe content and broader resource issues on a comprehensive level. However there is also clearly, a looming conflict between timber requirements and any adjustment to the boundaries of this coupe to preserve the leatherwood recently discovered. Nevertheless the presence of a Cable Harvesting Planner gives weight to our belief that the intent of the field visit was to examine how the harvesting configuration could be adjusted if commercial leatherwood was found.

As a further expression of the intent of Forestry Tasmania, a draft of the next 3 year harvesting plan for the Wedge District was handed to us for consultation with the beekeepers with sites in the District. This is to be examined at a meeting of Southern Beekeepers in the next two weeks. The beekeepers must then assess the leatherwood resource involved and make submissions to Forestry Tasmania. The real test of this new approach will then happen, that is, when the result of this process on the ground can be seen. At least this will give the beekeepers some input 6 months earlier than would otherwise have been the case.

It is certainly true to say that recent correspondence with Forestry Tasmania has left open the possibility of a more interactive and cooperative relationship between the two industries, at least in the South. Until the new Statewide Leatherwood Protocol being brokered by the Apiary Working Party is in place, we believe that this is the best we can expect.

We are about to monitor 3 coupes in the Huon District out of which it was agreed the leatherwood content would be preserved. Harvesting in these coupes is now completed. We will report on the results of the inspections when they are available. The inspection of the TN044B coupe Harvesting Plan, (referred to in the previous report), is to take place shortly and then we hope to arrange a field visit to that coupe with a Forestry Planner if leatherwood is not identified on the plan and excluded from harvesting.

Our reporting duties under the Associations Incorporations Act are complete and our income from subscriptions is just enough to enable us to pay our way. If only there were more hours in the day!!

However, obtaining membership on a more Statewide basis would be one of our present organisational focus`, and this would hopefully lead to some " new blood " on the executive. This is now becoming a pressing issue.

Please keep up the reporting on activities in State Forest so that we can keep our knowledge of coupe harvesting up to date and audit the coupes as harvesting is completed.

BOB DAVEY (President).