

Management of sinkholes in plantations: Implications for the Tasmanian Forest Practices Code

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A growing trend among Tasmanian forest companies in recent years has been to acquire private agricultural land in order to establish plantation forest. A number of Tasmanian karst regions have plantation development presently within their catchments including the important highly developed Category A karst at Mole Creek, Flowery Gully, Gunns Plains and the Florentine. At these locations ongoing plantation activities on previously cleared agricultural land has led to a need to establish a set of guidelines for identifying and managing the range of landforms and water issues that can be used in harvest plans. The guidelines aim to achieve the successful development of plantations while protecting karst and groundwater in areas where historic disturbance and/or subdued karst landforms present significant management problems. The guidelines aim to increase the ease of use of the existing Forest and Karst Manuals and introduce a new management – oriented classification such as “active” and “passive” sinkholes. “Active” sinkholes show signs of present soil movement e.g. scarps, steep slopes and direct karst conduits to underground streams, whereas “passive” sinkholes do not show these characteristics and are regarded as probably being more resilient to plantation operations.