|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **BIODIVERSITY EVALUATION SHEET**  **CLEARANCE AND CONVERSION OPERATIONS** | |
| **Planner name:** |  |
| **Date:** |  |
| **Coupe Name:** |  |
| **Location (Grid Reference):** |  |
| **Forest Practices Plan (FPP) if known:** |  |
| **Forest Practices Plan Area (FPP) (ha):** |  |
| **Area of clearing and conversion, within FPP boundary (ha):** |  |
| **Operation Type:**  (e.g. CF-CLR, CF-HP, CF-SP) |  |
| **Additional or background information to assist FPA staff with providing advice:** | |
| **Does the FPP area contain Vulnerable Land set aside in a previous FPP?** | |

# General Information

###### Advice must be sought from both the Biodiversity Program and the Earth Sciences Program for all proposed FPPs involving the clearance and conversion of native forest and/or threatened native non-forest vegetation.

###### Where an action involves converting forest to another land use, the applicant is advised to seek advice from the Australian Government if actions are likely to affect Matters of National Environmental Significance including threatened species and ecological communities listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

###### The FPA is responsible for implementation of the Tasmanian Government *Policy for Maintaining a Permanent Native Forest Estate* (PNFE Policy). The FPA Board have determined that FPPs for clearing of trees will be limited to a maximum of 40 hectares where it is for agricultural purposes. Practically, this will mean landowners wishing to clear more than 40 hectares will need more than one FPP and a maximum of 40 hectares can be cleared in any 12 month period.

###### The *Forest Practices Act* *1985* prohibits clearance and conversion of threatened native vegetation communities, unless under exceptional circumstances. Applications for clearance and conversion must meet one of four conditions in section 19(1AA) of the *Forest Practices Act*. The justification should be included in Section 1.4 of this evaluation sheet.

###### The [*FPA Planning Guideline 2008/1 (Significant Habitat Guideline)*](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/Planning/biodiversity/significant_habitat_guideline) provides a planning framework to avoid or limit the clearance and conversion of *significant habitat* for threatened fauna to non-native vegetation cover such as plantations, agriculture and infrastructure. It is stated that all *significant habitat* will be maintained other than in those circumstances where ‘Exercise of Discretion’ applies (see Section 9 of the Planning Guideline).

* Read and follow the guidelines in ‘*Planning forest practices plans that involve clearance and conversion of native vegetation*’ to help with the completion of this evaluation sheet. A list of **maps and other information** that must be sent to FPA’s Biodiversity Program is also provided in this document. Also refer to the flow chart ‘[Summary of FPA process for biodiversity special values assessment and planning](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/250334/Summary_of_FPA_process_for_biodiversity_special_values_assessment_and_planning.pdf)’.
* Ensure biodiversity evaluations and management recommendations are **current** at the commencement of operations. Evaluations should be reviewed if operations do not commence within, at most, **six months** of the biodiversity database search. **Contact the FPA for advice** if there is new information that might influence the management actions required.
* It is the responsibility of the planner to provide sufficient information for FPA specialist staff to provide advice on the biodiversity notification.

# SECTION 1: VEGETATION COMMUNITIES

Use the FPA *Forest Botany Manual* and field observations to identify the vegetation communities within the FPP area and use that information to fill in Tables 1-3. Following your field assessment, **create and attach a map of vegetation communities** within the FPP area. Indicate the points at which each field-based vegetation assessment was conducted. Clearly indicate the areas proposed for harvest and areas proposed for retention.

# 1.1 Native forest vegetation

List all the native forest communities in the FPP area (use code or long name) in Table 1.

**Table 1 Native forest communities**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Floristic community* | *Floristic Priority (A, B, np)* | *RFA community* | *RFA Priority (Y, Yog, N)* | *Is this a threatened community\* (Y/N)?* | *Total area to be harvested (ha)* | *Total area to be retained (ha)* | *Gross area (harvested + retained) (ha)* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Total |  |  |  |

## \*Threatened communities include threatened native vegetation communities (TNVCs) listed under [Schedule 3A of the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002*](https://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/conservation/threatened-species-and-communities/threatened-native-vegetation-communities)and threatened Ecological Communities (ECs) listed under the Commonwealth [*EPBC Act 1999*](https://www.environment.gov.au/epbc) – indicated in the *Forest Botany Manual* by a \* on the priority status.

|  |
| --- |
| Note: for the ECs **Tasmanian Forests and Woodlands dominated by black gum or Brookers gum (*Eucalyptus ovata* / *E. brookeriana*)** and **Tasmanian white gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) wet forest**, it is required to map patches <1ha (at least to 0.5 hectares). An additional native vegetation buffer of a minimum of 30 m is recommended to be retained to mitigate edge effects, in line with the [Approved Conservation Advice](https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/communities/pubs/77-conservation-advice.pdf) for these ECs. |

# 1.2 Native non-forest vegetation

List all native non-forest vegetation communities in the FPP area (use code or long name) in Table 2. Note that these are all floristic priority A.

**Table 2 Native non-forest vegetation communities**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Community (e.g. wetland, native grassland, heathland)* | | | | | *Is this a threatened community\* (Y/N)?* | *Total area to be harvested (ha)* | *Total area to be retained (ha)* | *Gross area (harvested + retained) (ha)* |
| *e.g. Highland Poa grassland* | | | | | *Yes* | *0 hectares* | *10 hectares* | *10 hectares* |
|  |  |  | Total |  |  |  | *10 hectares* | *10 hectares* |

# 1.3 Exotic vegetation

List the exotic vegetation in the FPP area (use code or long name) in Table 3. Note that all exotic vegetation is non-priority (N).

**Table 3 Exotic vegetation communities**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Exotic vegetation community (e.g. improved pasture, softwood plantation etc.)* | *Total area to be harvested (ha)* | *Total area remaining (ha)* | *Gross area (harvested + remaining) in FPP area (ha)* |
|  |  |  |  |
| Total |  |  |  |

## 1.4 [Permanent Native Forest Estate Policy](https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/149748/Tasmanian_Government_Policy_for_Maintaining_a_Permanent_Native_Forest_Estate_-_30_June_2017.pdf) (PNFEP) and threatened native vegetation communities (TNVCs)

Check thelatest report on the PNFE figures on the FPA website ([www.fpa.tas.gov.au](http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au)).

Does the FPP involve **any** **one or more** of the following?

* Clearing of more than 20 ha of native forest in any period of five consecutive years (based on calendar years) per property (PID);
* Clearing of a threatened native forest community or threatened native non-forest community;
* Clearing of a native forest community which is less than 2,000 ha in the bioregion (communities highlighted in the PNFE report); or
* Clearing of a native forest community that has reached/exceed the clearing threshold (communities highlighted in the PNFE report) or this threshold would be reached/exceeded after the proposed operation is complete.

YES  NO

If **YES**, provide details including any application to consider exceptional circumstances under PNFEP (non-threatened veg communities) or *Forest Practices Act* (threatened native vegetation communities).

(*e.g. harvesting of dry Eucalyptus viminalis grassy forest with < 2,000 ha in the bioregion, or plan is for >20 ha within 2 years.*)

**SECTION 2: THREATENED FLORA**

# 2.1 Sources of information

Obtain database information on known localities of threatened flora species **within 2 km** of the FPP area and undertake a field survey. It is recommended that the [BVD](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/Planning/biodiversity/biodiversity_values_database) or the NVA is checked; FPA cannot guarantee the accuracy of other databases. Indicate the source of information used, attach database reports and any field information (e.g. FPO survey map, consultant report).

**Databases:**   [BVD](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/Planning/biodiversity/biodiversity_values_database)  NVA  CONSERVE  Other (specify): ……………………………. Date checked: ..………………….……….

**Field sources:**  FPO/forester field survey  Consultant survey/report  Other (specify): ………………………..….. Date of survey: ………………….……….

# 2.2 Threatened flora records

In Table 4, list all threatened flora species with known localities within the FPP area and/or **within 5km** of the FPP area and complete the risk assessment for each species.

**Table 4 Threatened flora risk assessment**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Species (scientific name)* | *Survey skill level\** | *Are known localities inside FPP area? (include points on map).* | *Is any potential habitat present\*\*? Where? Include on planning map.* | *Have you surveyed for this species? (provide details)* | *Is the operation likely to impact known sites or potential habitat? Give details.* | *Proposed management actions?\*\*\** |
| E.g. *Boronia gunnii* | 2 | Yes – inside and outside, see attached map. | Yes, in the flood zone along the adjacent stream. See attached map. | Yes, 2 new plants were located adjacent to the stream inside the FPP area. | As this is a strictly riparian species, it is unlikely to be impacted by the proposed operation if the streams are protected. | 30m buffer on stream. |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

\* Check BVD report.

\*\* For **potential habitat** consider the [**flora habitat descriptions**](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/Planning/biodiversity/biodiversity_values_database) in the BVD report and relate them to the vegetation/habitats observed during the field survey.

\*\*\* **Proposed management actions:** Use information in the FPA biodiversity planning tools (e.g. BVD and flora technical notes) and any advice provided by the FPA ecologists, or ecological consultants, to develop proposed actions to manage relevant threatened flora species prior to submitting the notification to the FPA biodiversity program for formal advice. Whilst the Threatened Species Advisor doesn’t contain prescriptions for clearing operations, the recommendations for other operations may assist with developing suitable prescriptions. E.g. ‘*as this is a riparian species,* *streams have been buffered by 30m*’.

**SECTION 3: SITES OF POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR FLORA**

Does the proposed FPP area contain any sites of potential significance for flora identified in Table 4A or 4B of the [*Forest Botany Manual*](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/Planning/biodiversity/forest_botany_manual)? YES  NO

If **YES**, provide details of site, any potential impacts, and proposed management actions in Table 5.

**Table 5 Sites of potential significance for flora risk assessment**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Site of significance – include details e.g. size, location in the FPP area, and any associated values (e.g. threatened species locality or habitat)* | *Is the operation likely to impact the site of potential significance?*  *Note, if no impact is considered likely, a reason should be given.* | *Proposed management actions (e.g. exclusion, buffers, boundary marking etc.)* |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**SECTION 4: OTHER FLORA ISSUES**

**4.1 *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (PC)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Does the proposed FPP have PC sensitive vegetation types (refer to Table 2 of FPA [Flora Technical Note 8](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/225296/Flora_technical_note_8_Phytophthora.pdf) or the [*Forest Botany Manual*](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/Planning/biodiversity/forest_botany_manual)) or is it within a PC Management Area (refer to [FPA BVD webmap](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/Planning/biodiversity/biodiversity_values_database))? | YES  NO |

If **YES**, provide details below.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| If **YES**, can the guidelines in [*Flora Technical Note No .8*](http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/58054/Flora_technical_note_8_Phytophthora.pdf)*: Management of* Phytophthora cinnamomi *in production forest* be applied***?*** | YES  NO  UNSURE |

If **YES** include the relevant management prescriptions from *Flora* *Technical Note 8* in Table 10 and the FPP.

If **NO** or **UNSURE** provide details explaining why the guidelines cannot be applied and seek advice from FPA Biodiversity Program.

**4.2 Weeds**

The *Forest Practices Code* includes provision for the consideration of weed management in forestry operations. Please refer to the *Code* for guidelines on managing weeds. Use the box below to record any notes and/or management actions to be included for the management of weeds in the FPP area.

e.g. Spanish heath noted on roadsides.

e.g. No weeds noted in field survey.

**4.3 Remnant forest**

The *Forest Practices Code 2020* states: *Where native forest occurs mainly as relatively small patches of forest in substantially modified landscapes, consideration will be given to retention of native forest remnants to maintain local biodiversity (Section D4, page 66)*.

The *Forest Practices Code 2020* defines a remnant as ‘*the native vegetation remaining from the 'original' forest or non-forest vegetation in a landscape after land clearance/alteration. A remnant can be of any size or condition, including individual trees, both live and dead’.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Does the proposed FPP area contain remnant native vegetation? | YES  NO |

If **YES**, complete the risk assessment in Table 6.

**Table 6 Remnant forest risk assessment**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Description of remnant - including size and location within the FPP area* | *Is the proposed operation likely to impact the remnant?*  *Note, if no impact is considered likely, a reason should be given.* | *Proposed management actions to mitigate potential impacts* |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**4.4 Effects on reserves**

Reserves include:

* Formal reserves (e.g. World Heritage Area, State Reserve, Forest Reserve);
* Informal reserves (that have been dedicated as such for their flora values e.g. CAR informal reserves, Wildlife Habitat Strips);
* Special Management Zones for Flora or Fauna;
* Private land reserves (e.g. Private Forest Reserves Program, Conservation Covenants, Protected Areas on Private Land, etc.).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Is the FPP within, or directly adjacent to (e.g. sharing a boundary), a formal reserve, informal reserve, special management zone or private land reserve? | YES  NO |

If **YES,** give details in Table 7.

**Table 7 Reserves risk assessment**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Reserve (name) and type of reserve* | *Is the proposed operation likely to impact the reserve? (e.g. disease, weeds, wildlings, fire, mechanical damage, disturbance to threatened species)* | *Proposed management actions to mitigate potential impacts (e.g. applying buffers, machinery wash down)* |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

# SECTION 5: MATURE FOREST HABITAT

Information on mature habitat availability within and surrounding the FPP area is required when using the Threatened Species Adviser to obtain a management recommendation for mature forest dependent species (e.g. masked owl). This must include both a desktop and a field assessment. Desktop assessments can be completed using a spatial tool such as the [FPA Habitat Context Assessment Tool (HCAT)](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/Planning/biodiversity/habitat_context_assessment_tool). Field assessments can be conducted according to the guidelines in [FPA *Fauna Technical Note 2: Assessing mature habitat availability*](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/225274/Fauna_Tech_Note_2_Mature_habitat.pdf).

Indicate which spatial tool has been used: [FPA HCAT](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/Planning/biodiversity/habitat_context_assessment_tool) (recommended)  STT LCPlus report  PI-type  Other ………………………………………..

**Table 8 Mature forest availability pre- and post-harvest**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *% of the area within* ***5km*** *of FPP centroid comprising high and/or medium density mature habitat* | *Proportion of the area within* ***1km*** *of FPP centroid comprising high and/or medium density mature habitat* | | *Area (ha) of high and/or medium density mature habitat proposed for harvest* | *Area (ha) of high and/or medium density mature habitat remaining within* ***1km*** *after harvest* |
|  | % | hectares\* |  |  |

\* Add the areas of high and medium density mature habitat within 1km from the HCAT to get the total within 1km.

Attach the report from the spatial tool used and map of the distribution of mature forest (the mature habitat availability map available via the [HCAT](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/Planning/biodiversity/habitat_context_assessment_tool) may be used).

Comments on the availability of mature habitat noted in the field compared with the information provided by the desktop tools (spatial information) can be provided in the box below.

**SECTION 6: THREATENED FAUNA SPECIES**

# 6.1 Sources of information

Obtain information on threatened fauna species that are likely to occur **within 2 km** of the proposed FPP area. It is recommended that the [BVD](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/Planning/biodiversity/biodiversity_values_database) or the NVA is checked; FPA cannot guarantee the accuracy of other databases. Indicate the source of information used, attach database reports and any field information (e.g. FPO survey map, consultant report).

**Databases:**   [BVD](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/Planning/biodiversity/biodiversity_values_database)  NVA  CONSERVE  Other (specify): ……………………………. Date checked: ..………………….……….

**Field sources:**  FPO/forester field survey  Consultant survey/report  Other (specify): ………………………..….. Date of survey: ………………….……….

# 6.2 Threatened fauna

Use the information from the database report and on-ground surveys to complete the risk assessment in Table 9. Known localities within the FPP area and potentially impacted by the operation must be field verified (note that there may be constraints on the timing of this verification, e.g. eagle nest management constraint period).

**Table 9 Threatened fauna risk assessment**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Species name* | *Range category/s* | *Are known localities\* present? Specify in/outside FPP area and include points on a map.* | *Is potential and/or significant habitat\*\* present? Describe where and include on a map.* | *Is the proposed operation likely to impact known localities, and/or potential or significant habitat\*\*\* for the species? Give details.* | *How do you propose to manage this impact?****#*** |
| E.g. eastern barred bandicoot | Core range | No known localities present within 2km. | Approximately 5 hectares of potential habitat is present throughout the dry grassy *E. glob* forest – see attached map. No significant habitat has been recorded. | The potential habitat will be retained within the proposed reserve containing the dry grassy *E. glob* (see map). The reserve may be impacted by stock, weeds, and edge effects. | The reserved area will be fenced to exclude stock and washdown procedures will minimise the spread of weeds. |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**\*known locality:** You should list localities within, and outside of, the FPP area that may be impacted by the operation, and/or show these on a map. *E.g. eagles nest within 500m or 1km line of site (LOS) of the operations within the FPP area, or a stream species locality immediately downstream of the FPP area.*

**\*\*potential and/or significant habitat:** Provide description of the habitat and location within or adjacent to the FPP area (*e.g. potential habitat within 500m/1km LOS for eagles, downstream habitats for stream species, or within 100m of search area*). **Prepare** **a map** of the distribution of fauna habitats.

\*\*\* The [***FPA Planning Guideline 2008/1 (Significant Habitat Guideline)***](https://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/Planning/biodiversity/significant_habitat_guideline) states that all *significant habitat* (for relevant species) will be maintained other than in those circumstances where ‘Exercise of Discretion’ applies. If the proposal is likely to impact *significant habitat*, please provide justification with your notification for why the FPA should exercise its discretion in accordance with Section 9 of the Planning Guideline.

# **Proposed management actions:**Useinformation in the FPA biodiversity planning tools (E.g. FPA fauna technical notes, BVD) and any advice provided by the FPA ecologists or ecological consultants to develop proposed actions to manage relevant threatened fauna species prior to submitting the notification to the FPA biodiversity program for formal advice. Whilst the Threatened Species Advisor doesn’t contain prescriptions for clearing operations, the recommendations for other operations may assist with developing suitable prescriptions. E.g. ‘*as this is a riparian species,* *streams have been buffered by 30m*’.

Note that some species may require a specialist survey (*e.g. Marrawah skipper*). If this has been done, please attach the report.

Is a survey report attached? YES  NO  Document number/title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_

# SECTION 7: PRESCRIPTIONS FOR BIODIVERSITY VALUES

* Using the information gathered in the above sections, information in the FPA biodiversity planning tools, and any preliminary advice provided by the FPA biodiversity program, list the proposed management prescriptions to be included in the FPP for each biodiversity value in Table 10. **Ensure all specialist advice received is saved in the FPA notification database for compliance purposes.**

**Table 10 Proposed management prescriptions for biodiversity values to be included in the FPP**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Biodiversity value** | **Management prescriptions to be included in the FPP** |
| 1. Vegetation communities |  |
| 2. Threatened flora species |  |
| 3. Sites of potential significance for flora |  |
| 4.1 *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (PC) |  |
| 4.2 Weeds |  |
| 4.3 Remnant forest |  |
| 4.5 Effects on reserves |  |
| 5. Mature habitat |  |
| 6. Threatened fauna species |  |
| Any other management prescriptions for biodiversity values |  |

***Include the following wording in all FPPs –***

**Reporting new sites for threatened fauna and flora**

If new sites for threatened species (e.g. raptor nests, devil dens, threatened flora sites etc.) are found during the implementation of a forest practices plan, the sites must be reported to the Forest Practices Authority as soon as practical.

# SECTION 8: DUTY OF CARE

If the management prescriptions for biodiversity values developed for the plan area (listed in Table 10) result in an area excluded from harvest that is above the Duty of Care threshold (see the *Forest Practices Code 2020*, pg 57) **and** the landowner/forest manager is not willing/able to meet the prescription through voluntary mechanisms then **seek further advice from the FPA**.

**Upload the final version of this biodiversity evaluation sheet and any supporting information (e.g. maps, database outputs, specialist advice) to the** [**FPA Coverpage database**](https://coverpage.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/account/login) **for monitoring purposes.**

**It is recommended that FPOs also keep a final version of this biodiversity evaluation and any supporting information with the FPP.**