

This policy is currently under review.

Greens NSW

Forests and Wilderness Policy



Revised November 2006

Principles

1. Major shifts in NSW forest policy are urgently required in order to achieve the protection of forest and wilderness resources, ecologically sustainable forest management and resolutions to ongoing community conflict.
2. The State's wood needs should be met from regrowth forests not needed for conservation, reforestation, woodlots and native mixed species plantations. Optimal utilisation of the existing timber plantation estate will lessen the dependence on native forests.
3. Recognising that water is the highest value product which can be obtained from the forest estate, regrowth forests should be managed towards their old growth state for both biodiversity and water conservation.
4. All areas of high wilderness value, rainforest, 'old growth' forests, town water catchments and habitat of threatened species should be fully protected.
5. Rural communities affected by changes in forest policies should be compensated and workers and their families assisted in structural adjustment that generates employment and wealth.
6. Community concerns should be genuinely addressed, but, consistent with the precautionary principle they should not prevent the taking of urgent measures to secure a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system and ecologically sustainable forest management.
7. Realistic costing is required of timber from public land, including the cost of rehabilitation and reforestation.

Goals

The Greens NSW support:

8. The recognition of Indigenous Australians' prior custodianship of land, much of which is now NSW Wilderness, State Forest and National Park;
9. Consultation with Indigenous Australians on management and in decisions affecting lands which are traditionally theirs;
10. Public participation in areas of public asset management, especially 'third party' rights to enforce environmental laws, community

This policy is currently under review.

- involvement in land-use decisions and forest management planning and regulation of public authorities;
11. The recognition of the roles of wilderness and 'old growth' forests in maintaining water quality and quantity, protecting threatened species and their habitats and in conserving soils;
 12. Mandatory minimum standards of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for all forestry operations, including in regrowth and mixed species timber plantation forests;
 13. Co-operation between State and Federal Governments where this produces timely, high quality decisions and the ecologically sustainable management of natural resources;
 14. The use of overriding Commonwealth powers where State Governments refuse to co-operate and/or where they carry out activities which are damaging to the environment and contrary to the national interest;
 15. The establishment of a comprehensive adequate and representative reserve system for all ecosystems, including forests across all land tenures, where the nationally agreed reserve criteria (JANIS) are the minimum benchmark; and
 16. The development of forest and fibre industries in NSW, such as hemp and other alternatives (e.g. agricultural waste fibres such as sugar cane) which are consistent with Ecologically Sustainable Development principles to ensure that NSW plays a major role in the achievement of national self-sufficiency in the production of all major forest and fibre products.

Detail

The Greens NSW will work towards:

Forests

17. Urgent phasing out of woodchip exports from NSW native forests;
18. Legislation to prohibit any new intensive logging proposals such as wood for biomass or charcoal production;
19. Ensuring that forests already identified as required for a Comprehensive Adequate and Representative reserve system, including all old growth and wilderness forests are immediately dedicated as national parks as a further step towards high conservation value forest protection;
20. Achieving an immediate moratorium on forestry operations in all high conservation value forests identified as being likely to be required for 'a comprehensive, adequate and representative' reserve system;
21. Achieving immediately, the effective implementation and enforcement of vegetation clearance controls and environmental protection measures, on private lands, via the adoption and gazettal of Protected

This policy is currently under review.

- Lands maps and the active operation of the Native Vegetation Act (NVA);
22. Ensuring that there is no exemption for private land logging under the NVA and implementing a prohibition on logging and clearing of all rainforest, old growth forest, and high conservation value areas under the NVA;
 23. The immediate development and implementation of 10-year plans for the establishment of a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative reserve system throughout each bioregion in NSW;
 24. Ensuring that private land in areas with an existing RFA is subject to a full strategic assessment of conservation values using immediately available data to identify high priority areas for purchase and for the application of voluntary conservation measures on private property;
 25. Ensuring that funding for acquisition and voluntary conservation measures are targeted towards the highest priority areas in a strategic manner;
 26. The completion of Western Regional Assessments in the Riverina, Nandewar and modified South Eastern Highlands bioregions;
 27. The implementation of immediate deferrals of high conservation value areas of public land in those regions pending the results of the assessment;
 28. The development of revised JANIS criteria for application in those assessments and the resultant establishment of a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative reserve system in each region;
 29. Ensuring that third party appeal rights to enforce environmental legislation on forests are re-instated in full as soon as possible;
 30. Ensuring that the Forestry Regulations 1999 which mandate on the spot fines for peaceful protestors are repealed as soon as possible;
 31. Phasing out of commercial firewood collection from native forests with the development of an Integrated Firewood Replacement Strategy to apply in affected areas;
 32. Implementation of a Threat Abatement Plan for firewood collection under the NSW Threatened Species Act 1995 with strict regulations on domestic firewood collection across all tenures;
 33. Prohibition on logging or clearing of all hollow-bearing trees across all tenures, with implementation of retention of an adequate number of recruitment trees across all size classes;
 34. Transfer of Forest Management Zones 1, 2 and 3a on State Forest tenure to National Parks tenure where appropriate, and purchase of leasehold over 'unloggable' Forest Management Zones identified for transfer to National Parks. Statutory protection of all Forest Management Zones 1, 2 & 3a;
 35. Implementing a major reforestation scheme to establish wildlife corridors linking remaining forests and woodlands, to allow the

This policy is currently under review.

- movement of fauna, re-establishing riparian vegetation to improve the health of our waterways and re-establishing native vegetation in cleared and degraded lands;
36. Having regard to the water demand of intensive forestry, the immediate identification of land suitable for mixed species woodlots for long-term selective logging and land suitable for plantation establishment (including that suitable for use with treated effluent);
 37. Achieving a public review of all Wood Supply Agreements entered into by the Forestry Commission of NSW to evaluate their ecological sustainability and their continued desirability in the light of changes in Government policy and altered market and industry conditions;
 38. Providing assistance to towns, communities and families affected by forest conservation decisions, by identifying, developing and creating appropriate ecologically sustainable jobs in a range of forest related industries based on the region's forests;
 39. Ensuring that the regulation of forestry operations via Species Impact Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, water pollution control licences and soil conservation standards are re-applied to State Forests and forestry operations and enforced and where appropriate, reviewed to increase effectiveness, breadth of application and improve the delivery of ecologically sustainable forest management;
 40. Establishing a publicly accountable agency to review and monitor forest management practices and prepare a draft 'code of logging practice' capable of third party enforcement, for forestry operations on all land tenures, for public exhibition and comment;
 41. Opposing resource security and the payment of further subsidies to the NSW timber industry from public funds; and
 42. The protection of threatened species within NSW public forests by:
 - Ensuring that the NPWS Director General and the Minister for the Environment identify and protect the critical habitat of threatened species without undue delay
 - Ensuring that Forests NSW are required to abide by all the requirements of the Threatened Species Conservation Act like any other land manager and
 - Increasing funding for and accelerating the preparation of Recovery Plans for Threatened species;
 43. Pursuing threatened species protection on private property by:
 - Instigating an ongoing biological survey and research program for natural ecosystems
 - Ensuring an independent scientific review of the conservation protocols applied to forestry operations and the implementation of the recommendations of such a review

This policy is currently under review.

- Encouraging, promoting and funding the implementation of Voluntary Conservation Agreements over private properties with nature conservation values and
 - Providing assistance to private land holders to protect Threatened Species habitat, wilderness, rainforest, town water catchments and high conservation value or 'old growth' forests;
44. Ensuring that the impacts of global warming and other aspects of climate change are recognised and planned for by land managers and incorporated into the ecologically sustainable management of forests.;

Forest and Fibre Industries

45. Promoting and securing the legalisation of hemp to facilitate the development of hemp-based, and blended, fibre products;
46. Promoting and fostering the development of other alternative fibre sources and their associated industries;
47. Promoting the creation of an environmental restoration and repair industry as a major new regional employment initiative;
48. Encouraging and fostering private capital investment in reforestation, woodlots and mixed species timber plantation development for sawlogs on private lands;
49. Purchase lands for mixed species woodlots and hardwood timber plantations on appropriate sites. Resolution of the range of environmental concerns relating to the establishment of such timber plantations (such as riparian zone management, species selection, weed control, chemical usage, local water demands etc);
50. Directing additional management focus and labour to the active management of existing plantations to ensure their optimum productivity and availability as alternative timber supplies;

Wilderness

51. Ensuring the secure protection under the Wilderness Act 1987, of all areas of high wilderness quality, nominated for assessment by the National Parks and Wildlife Service;
52. Protecting all areas of wilderness within existing National Parks through the Plan of Management for the park or reserve;
53. Achieving substantial funding of the Wilderness Fund, set up under the Wilderness Act 1987, to permit public education, preparation of Plans of Management, the formulation of conservation agreements with private landholders and to secure the voluntary purchase of private lands within identified wilderness areas;

This policy is currently under review.

54. Instituting an immediate moratorium on clearing and all other threatening activities within identified wilderness areas and wilderness nominations under assessment;
55. The creation of secure reserves, linked by corridors, across all bio-regions and land tenures, including the estuarine and marine environments, capable of providing habitat to protect the nation's biological diversity and to permit the ongoing biological functioning of viable populations, including their evolution and adaptation during a period of rapid climate change (see Biodiversity Policy); and
56. Preventing and prohibiting the further conversion of leasehold Crown land to freehold title.