

GOONGERAH ENVIRONMENT CENTRE SURVEY REPORT

LARGE TREES AND THREATENED FAUNA

FOUND IN VICFORESTS LOGGING COUPE 892-509-0002

Sellers Road – Bendoc State Forest – East Gippsland

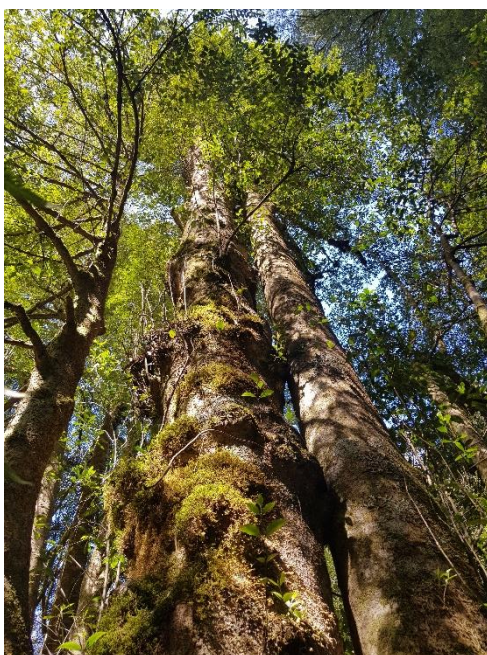
Abstract

Large trees detected in this area require protection under the relevant mandatory biodiversity conservation measures set out in the regulatory framework governing logging operations in Victoria's State Forests.

Forest within VicForests logging coupe 892-509-0002 were surveyed to determine the presence of large trees, rainforest, and nocturnal wildlife. Large trees which were found were measured to determine the diameter at breast height (DBH) and marked on a GPS with a waypoint. There were more large trees present which were not measured and recorded. During the evening a nocturnal spotlight survey was conducted to determine the presence of wildlife.

Three very large trees were found, the largest was a Cut-tail Ash (*Eucalyptus fastigata*) which measured at 4m DBH (waypoint ID EUC03SR). In addition, rainforest was observed but not recorded, and threatened species were detected in a nocturnal spotlight.

The Cut-tail Ash [is listed on the National Trust](#) as being of State significance and is the largest, and only one of its kind on the register. Given the significance of this area, the trees found, presence of cool temperate rainforest stands, and several threatened species, we recommend that the coupe be removed from the TRP to protect this important stand of forest.



Cool temperate rainforest canopy species Southern Sassafras (*Atherosperma moschatum*)
found in VicForests logging coupe 892-509-0002

Date of survey
21 November 2020

Date of report
15 October 2021

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Method: Surveys conducted 21 November 2020

Equipment Used

- Measuring tape
- Global Positioning System (GPS) [Garmin GPSMAP 64s]
- Mobile phone for images
- Handheld Sony video recorder
- Handheld high-powered spotlighting torch

Large tree assessment

1. On 21 November 2020 at approximately 10am, surveyors started walked through forests in VicForests logging coupe 892-509-0002 to determine the presence of large trees.
2. Large trees were measured at the highest point on the slope at breast height (1.3m) over bark to determine the circumference. The measurement was recorded, and a waypoint marked on the GPS at the location of the trees. Photos of the trees were taken using a mobile phone.

Nocturnal spotlight survey

1. On 21 November 2020 at approximately 9pm, surveyors commenced a spotlighting survey in forests within VicForests logging coupe 892-509-0002. The survey involved shining a hand-held spotlight into the canopy of trees to search for the presence of nocturnal fauna.
2. Fauna detected were identified, the location of the fauna species was marked with the GPS, time was recorded and if the species was seen or heard. Fauna that was heard only were recorded on GPS from the point they were heard from. Fauna was filmed using a hand-held video camcorder where possible.

Results

Three trees were measured with DBH ranging from 2.1 -3.9 metres. The results of the large tree assessment are shown in Table 1, Figures 1 – 3, and the map at Figure 5.

Two threatened Greater Gliders were detected during the spotlight as well as two Yellow-bellied Gliders. The results of the nocturnal survey are shown in Table 2, Figure 4, and the map at Figure 5.

Table 1: Large trees recorded 21 November 2020

Time	Waypoint ID	Measurement (circumference)	DBH	Location (GDA94)
10:00	EUC01SR	10 m	3.1 m	55 H 671332 5875568
10:11	EUC02SR	6.65 m	2.1 m	55 H 671302 5875569
10:51	EUC03SR	12.3 m	3.9 m	55 H 671127 5875487

Table 2: Results of nocturnal spotlight survey 21 November 2020

Time	Waypoint ID	Species	Type	Location (GDA94)
20:45	YBGHST01	Yellow-bellied Glider (<i>P. australis</i>)	Aural	55 H 671266 5875562
21:03	YBGHST01	Yellow-bellied Glider (<i>P. australis</i>)	Aural	55 H 671163 5875616
22:02	GG01STEUC	Southern Greater Glider (<i>P. volans</i>)	Visual	55 H 671128 5875484
23:12	GG02STEUC	Southern Greater Glider (<i>P. volans</i>)	Visual	55 H 671229 5875419



Figure 1 Waypoint ID: EUC01SR



Figure 2 Waypoint ID: EUC02SR



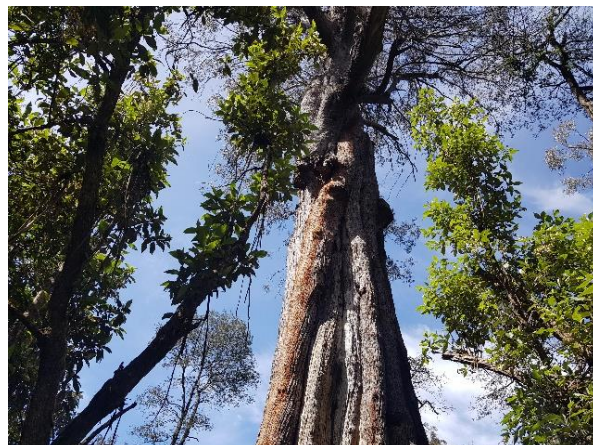
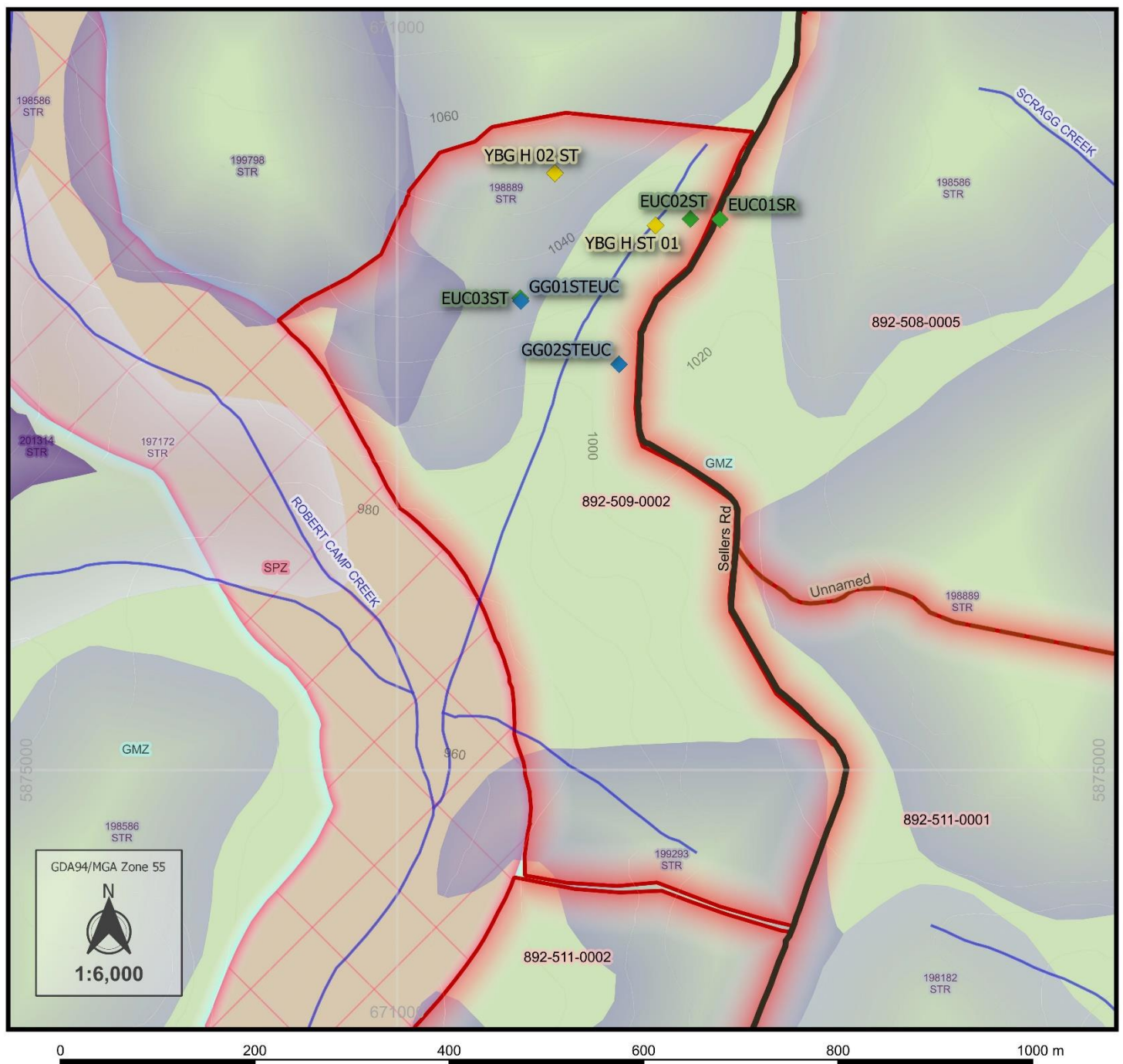


Figure 3 Waypoint ID: EUC03SR



Figure 4 Waypoint ID: GG01STEUC

Figure 5: map of large trees and fauna found in VicForests logging coupe 892-509-0002



Current Investigation

- ◆ Eucalypt
- ◆ Greater Glider
- ◆ Yellow-bellied Glider

Public Land

- Parks and Reserves
- Forest Management Zones
 - Special Protection Zone
 - Special Management Zone
 - General Management Zone
 - All FMZ Forest Areas

Logging and Disturbance

- Scheduled Logging Coupes (VicForests, September 2021)
- Logging History (LOGSEASON)
 - 195960
 - 196970
 - 197980
 - 198990
 - 199900
 - 200001
 - 200910

Other layers

- Roads
 -
 -
- Watercourses
 -
 -
- Contours
 -

Relevant Legislation

“Planning Standards for timber harvesting operations in Victoria’s State forests 2014, Appendix 5 to the Management Standards and Procedures for timber harvesting operations in Victoria’s State forests 2014”, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, The State of Victoria, 2014 (Planning Standards)

Excerpt from table 4, page 43:

East Gippsland	Greater Glider	<i>Petauroides volans</i>	Establish a SPZ of approximately 100 ha of suitable habitat where verified records report more than 2 individuals per hectare, more than 10 individuals per km or more than 15 individuals per hour of spotlighting, or where substantial populations are located in isolated or unusual habitat.
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Forest Management Plan For The East Gippsland Forest Management Area, Victoria Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, East Melbourne, December 1995 (EG FMP)

Excerpt from page 30:

CONSERVATION GUIDELINE continued

Arboreal mammals. For each of the following occurrences, approximately 100 ha of suitable habitat will be included in the SPZ:

- resident Koala populations.
- Greater Glider and Common Brushtail Possum – >2 individuals per ha, >10 per km, or >15 per hour of spotlighting.
- Yellow-bellied Glider – >0.2 per ha, >5 per km, or >7 per hour of spotlighting.
- Eastern Pygmy Possum – >5 per standard pitfall line over 5 days.
- substantial populations of the above species that are isolated or in unusual habitat.

Rich mammal sites. Well-documented sites that are particularly rich in mammal species will be included in the SPZ or SMZ wherever practical.

3.2 Protection of large trees

1. In all coupes where timber harvesting is conducted, VicForests must make all reasonable endeavours to protect large trees from the direct impacts of timber harvesting and regeneration burning.

a. Where practicable, large trees are to be incorporated into retained patches or within expanded exclusion areas.

b. Slash and bark must not be allowed to accumulate within 3 metres of the base of large trees in accordance with section 7.2.4.1 of the *Management Standards and Procedures for timber harvesting in Victoria's State forests 2014*.

c. Damage to large trees caused by felling or extracting other trees should be avoided

d. The construction of roading and snig tracks through retained large tree patches or expanded exclusion areas should be avoided.

e. Where there is no practicable alternative (that will have a lesser environmental impact), the construction of roading and snig tracks through retained large tree patches or expanded exclusion areas is acceptable, providing that the large trees as defined above are retained and harvesting slash created during snigging or road construction is removed from the patch to minimise future fire risk.

Discussion/recommendations

The large trees measured in this coupe were just a selection of large trees present. There is some historic selective logging, however senescent trees were the dominant age class of Eucalypts observed, along with numerous hollow-bearing trees. The coupe is situated in one of the few areas which was not impacted by the 2019/2020 bushfires and is a critical refuge for threatened wildlife and rare old forest. It is within the areas identified by the Environment Department as an important area for wildlife following the fires¹.

One of the trees measured (waypoint ID EUC03SR) at 3.9m DBH [is listed on the National Trust](#) as being of State significance, and is the largest, and only Cut-tail Ash on the register. The large tree protections don't require VicForests to retain even minimum buffers around large old trees which could help to protect trees from damage from logging machines.

According to the Forest Protection Survey Program survey report for this coupe, accessed 14 October 2021, other large trees, cool temperate rainforest species, Yellow-bellied Gliders, Sooty Owl, and Greater Gliders were also detected within this coupe.

Given the significance of this area due to presence of numerous threatened Greater Gliders and owls, very large trees, and threatened cool temperate rainforest, all of which have become much rarer since the Black Summer bushfires of 2019/2020, we recommend that coupe 892-509-0002 be removed from the TRP.



¹ Precautionary measures in timber harvesting post the 2019/20 Victorian bushfires, Regulatory position statement. May 2020. Conservation Regulator Victoria p. 7, 9