

MONSONS HONEY & APIARY PRODUCTS

ABN 28 109 490 987

ACN 005 912 989

Postal Address: Box 251
Box 251 Mildura VIC 3502
Email: monsonshoney@bigpond.com

Ph: 03 5024 8674
Fax: 03 5024 8673
Mob: 0427 248 674

March 25, 2010

Cypress Forests Assessment
National Resources Commission
GPO Box 4206
SYDNEY NSW 2001

SUBMISSION FOR CYPRESS FORESTS ASSESSMENT

I am writing on behalf of myself, as a beekeeper and pollination specialist from Gol Gol, South-West NSW, and the beekeepers I contract to pollinate almonds grown in North-West Victoria. This year I will be contracting over 130 beekeepers from Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia to supply 80,000 hives. These figures will increase as trees mature. As a result I am frequently in touch with my beekeepers, the wider community of beekeepers, and government bodies, to assist in the preparation and delivery of strong healthy hives needed for a successful almond pollination and harvest.

Several of my beekeepers have expressed their concern that a change in management or ownership of Cypress Forests could result in the reduction of bee sites. In fact, any change in forest resources has the potential to influence the beekeeping industry and the agricultural crops that depend on its pollination services. The beekeeping industry may be considered small, but it plays a crucial role in the production of a large percentage of our food.

As beekeepers do not own the land on which they farm their bees, they rely on public and private land sites for the resources needed to maintain hive health and strength, to produce honey, deliver pollination services, breed queens and produce packaged bees. Cypress forests, as indeed most forest areas, are crucial to the existence of the beekeeping industry. The trees, shrubs and grasses of a cypress forest supply nectar and pollen at various times of the year, which are frequently utilized for the build up of bee colonies in the Spring, for raising healthy bees and producing various floral honey flows. Warm sheltered spots in these forests also provide good places for wintering bees.

Cypress forests may not be used as much as other forests, but they are still a valuable resource for beekeepers, complimenting the variety and availability of resources elsewhere. Rainfall, drought, fire, flood, expanding agriculture, and restricted areas all have an influence on available resources. Not only that, but a beekeeper has to be able to choose a resource that best suits the needs of his bees at that particular time, such as a high protein pollen to build up a bee's immune system to fight disease or a warm

protected environment. So, it's important that a wide range of forest resources are available at any one time. In fact, I would predict that Cypress forests will be used a lot more in the future, to control the effect of Small Hive Beetle – the drier, less humid conditions of Cypress forests not being conducive to their breeding cycle.

The demand for pollination services is increasing all the time, as young trees mature and need more bees, as growers discover the benefits of pollination and as farmers find they have no bees to produce a crop. Australia's feral bee population has contributed significantly to the pollination of smaller crops, but are under the same threats as farmed bees. When exotic bee diseases and pests hit our country, as they have around the world, feral bees will disappear, along with farmed bees, resulting in a dramatic increase in the demand for honeybee pollination services and bee sites to maintain the bees required.

So, to summarize, beekeepers are dependent on Cypress forests, and request that all bee sites are retained to maintain a beekeeping industry and supply the increasing demand for pollination services. And, as important stakeholders in the use of Cypress forests, we request that we are part of future planning and management strategies.

Please feel free to contact me for further information.

Yours faithfully

Trevor Monson

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Specialist Pollination Services
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