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From: Hugh & Nan Nicholson [<mailto:terania@activ8.net.au>]

Sent: Tuesday, 13 October 2009 5:36 PM

To: Felicity Calvert

Subject: River Red Gum and Woodland Forests in the Riverina bioregion

Terania Native Forests Action Group would like to make the following submission to the Natural Resources Commission regarding the Regional Assessment of River Red Gums and Woodland Forests.

Our group has been involved for over 30 years with advocating the wise use of native forests. We are greatly concerned at the current endangerment of the River Red Gum forests. Excessive harvesting coupled with reduced water availability, through over-use, drought and climate change have brought the forests to the edge of destruction. Their situation is so dire at present and their demise so unthinkable that heroic efforts must be made to rescue them.

This means that the NRC should take an extremely conservative approach to allowing any further destructive uses of the forests. It needs to address the following matters which it did not cover in the Assessment:

1. A thorough scientific assessment of the conservation values of the forests needs to be completed
2. The ecological impact of past and future logging needs to be assessed.
3. The already established national reserve criteria for these forests need to be met.
4. Refugia and linking habitats need to be identified.
5. The legal requirements of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 need to be addressed.

Our group regards the vulnerability of these forests to be so extreme that the following measures need to be introduced immediately:

1. There should be no further logging at all.
2. All remaining publicly-owned forests in the bioregion should be included in new National Parks, with adequate funding provided.
3. These parks would need to be created in consultation with the traditional custodians whose ancestors' management ensured that these forests have been conserved for millennia up until the present.
4. Environmental water flows to the forests must be increased.
5. Local individuals and businesses affected by cessation of logging need to be compensated.

Whilst these actions may appear extreme, they are in fact cautious and

conservative. Allowing the forests to be further degraded is an extreme action, and one that can be achieved by doing nothing but accepting business as usual.

Yours faithfully,

Nan Nicholson (Secretary),

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