

The Institute of Foresters of Australia

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The Editor
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By email

Wellington Discovery Forest

The decision by the Dept of CALM to establish the Wellington Discovery Forest in 1992 was a far sighted move as was the action by Parliament in 2004 to formally gazette this. 684 ha area of jarrah forest as a special reserve for education and research. This gave the area a very high level of protection.

The area is divided into three zones one of which provides information and illustration of jarrah forest ecology, the second zone is for establishment of research trials and the third is a management zone to demonstrate a range of forest management activities. One of these is for the thinning of 10ha of forest every 10 years to illustrate the impacts of this treatment.

Visitors to these areas are very impressed at the marked improvement in tree health and the better development of understorey species in the areas that were thinned in 1992. The demonstrations have been very useful to show owners of private native forest in the South West how they might better manage their own forests. Two workshops were held last year and the land owners who attended were very appreciative of the examples available. In the coming month a group of 30 students from Edith Cowan (metro campus) and another group from the Australian National University Fenner School of Environment & Society will be visiting the thinning examples in the Discovery Forest as part of their degree course in natural resource management. Over time as other institutions come to recognise the wealth of opportunities available in the Discovery Forest for research and learning other academic institutions will probably wish to be involved.

The global warming group who have consistently opposed the Discovery Forest since 1992 wish to have the Discovery Forest made National Park probably to prevent any further demonstrations of the small areas to be thinned, (10ha every 10 years). In effect it is a form of censure to control what visitors to the Discovery Forest can see. Whilst they are entitled to their opinions it takes a very narrow view of the future where no one method of forest management (even in National Parks) is likely to suit all situations, bearing in mind the declining rainfall in the South West. The more information and examples of different forest management options established in the past and available for people to see, the better informed the community will be.
Yours sincerely

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