

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Fire salvage logging to commence at Mt Stirling

Salvage timber harvesting, which has already commenced near Mt Skene and Tomahawk Gap, will commence shortly in the Mt Stirling area.

Over the past weeks, VicForests has conducted both ground and aerial surveys to ascertain the extent of damage from the 2006/07 bushfires on the Alpine Ash in the Mansfield State forest. A high priority for the State Government is to salvage high-value timber from these areas prior to it deteriorating.

“Our assessments so far indicate that between 2000 and 2500 hectares of Ash forest in the Mansfield District has been fire-killed,” said VicForests Senior Forest Officer, Peter Scales.

“This means we need to harvest at a rate approximately ten-fold that of normal, pre-fire operations, over the next two to three years.”

For public safety reasons, the Circuit Road will be closed at times between 6am and 6pm on weekdays (excluding public and school holidays) whilst harvesting is in progress, between Clear Hills Track and south of the Mt Speculation Road. This closure will be in place until late-May 2007, and will continue from November 2007.

Access to popular destinations such as Craig’s Hut and Pineapple Flat will be via the King River side of the Circuit Road (clockwise direction from Telephone Box Junction). Appropriate signage will be placed at Telephone Box Junction.

“We have been working with the Mansfield Shire, Four Wheel Drive Victoria and the Visitor Information Centre, to endeavour to notify visitors to the area about the road closures and the presence of log trucks”, Mr Scales said.

A salvage harvesting operation at Bald Hill, north east of Merrijig, will also be commencing soon. The cartage route for this coupe includes Greenways Road and Buttercup Road, and residents in this area have been notified that they can expect to see an increase in log truck traffic in the coming weeks and months.

“If residents have concerns they should contact me at the VicForests Mansfield office,” Mr Scales said.

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Media enquiries: Peter Scales, Senior Forest Officer, VicForests. Tel. 5733 1230

Image: Mechanical falling machine in salvage coupe near Tomahawk Gap, operated by Jim Eddy, who has returned to work in the Mansfield District from salvaging timber at Corryong following the 2003 Alpine Fires.

