

VicForests Special Management Plan (VFSMP)

Forest Management Area:	East Gippsland (15) and Tambo (14)
Forest Management Blocks:	Timbarra (814) and Scorpion (747)
VicForests SMP Number:	VFSMP49
Planned Prepared by:	VicForests Biodiversity Planner
Date:	21 June, 2013

Featured Attributes:

Spot-tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*)

VicForests Special Management Plan Area:

- VicForests Reserved Habitat Area (VFRHA): 1001.661 ha;
- VicForests Special Management Area (VFSMA): 534.446 ha;
- Area Source: Geographic Information System (GIS).

VicForests Special Management Plan Site Description:

The area covered by this VFSMP is contained completely within State Forest, and is mapped as part of both the Highlands (Southern Fall), and East Gippsland Uplands Bioregions. The hydrological systems associated with this Plan are located within the Running Creek and Timbarra River catchments.

This VFSMP utilises a proportion of the existing Special Protection Zone (SPZ) network, which is directly managed by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI). These formal conservation zones were implemented to provide for multiple attributes as listed in the East Gippsland Forest Management Plan, including Linear Reserve, Rainforest Site Of Significance, National Estate Biodiversity and Old Growth values (SPZ P-814-02-02, P-814-02-05 and P-814-02-06), and the Gippsland Forest Management Plan for Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) protection, Old Growth values, Powerful and Sooty Owl, and Scorpion Site Of Significance (SPZ – 673). These featured SPZ values are expected to support the habitat requirements of the Spot-tailed Quoll.

Additional sections of General Management Zone (GMZ) are also included in this VFSMP to capture other similarly appropriate areas of preferred habitat surrounding the detection site, and to provide spatial connectivity to larger conservation reserves in both an easterly and westerly direction. The areas selected for retention and protection were based largely on vegetation communities, topography and consolidation of preferred habitat at a sub-catchment level.

While both the Spot-tailed Quoll Action Statement (2003), and Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) Draft Habitat Protection Guidelines (2010) suggest that this species may inhabit many different forested environments, it has been noted that within their large home range they preferentially occupy drainage lines, gullies, flats and escarpments rather than ridges and mid to upper slopes. Habitat containing a dense overstorey and understorey vegetation, the availability of suitable den sites (large hollow-bearing trees, fallen logs or caves, rock jumbles and escarpments) and a high density of prey species are also considered to be of critical importance.

EVC mapping indicates that the highest proportion of the VFRHA is located within wet forest types (53%). Of the drier EVC group described in the area, both the Valley Grassy Forest (16%) and Dry Valley Forest (2%) are located either along gently undulating slopes, valley floors, minor gullies, ephemeral streams or river flats.

This analysis suggests that the majority of this Reserved Habitat Area is located within environments that are considered to be preferred by this species, including a more structurally diverse forest type likely to provide suitable ecological requirements, such as an abundant prey source and den sites.

A review of historical data demonstrates that harvesting disturbance has been confined to a relatively small proportion of the overall VFRHA (18%). The vast majority of this activity was

undertaken during periods from 1962 to 1985. Harvesting operations employed in some of these earliest periods were conducted utilising a less intensive management system of single tree selection (6%). The most recently recorded harvesting event within the VFRHA was a small section of less than 1 hectare completed in 2006-08.

SFRI data analysis also shows that the forest consists predominately of a late mature to mature age classification with no significant new disturbance events having been captured. There has been no harvesting or other forest disturbance recorded across the large majority of the designated VFRHA area (67%). Disturbance activities described in this data set are now of sufficient age that ground cover and overstorey vegetation would most likely have been restored.

DEPI preferred habitat modelling for the Sooty Owl overlaps with almost the full extent of the VFRHA (97%), and indicates that the associated forest vegetation has structural and age characteristics compatible for Spot-tailed Quoll habitat. This is also supported by Old Growth modelling, which demonstrates that a substantial portion of the VFRHA (33%) contains forest strata classified as being negligibly disturbed, and of the oldest growth stage.

VicForests Special Management Plan Objectives:

To preserve suitable forest habitat within the vicinity of a confirmed Spot-tailed Quoll detection site in State forest, which will:

- Adequately provide suitable habitat for the Spot-tailed Quoll;
- Be consistent with conservation measures as described in the Spot-tailed Quoll Action Statement.

VicForests Special Management Plan Prescriptions:

- To preserve Spot-tailed Quoll preferred habitat by implementing a protective prescription of a 1000 hectare Reserved Habitat Area and a 500 hectare Special Management Area around the species detection site, as per the Spot-tailed Quoll Action Statement (2003), and DSE Draft Habitat Protection Guidelines (2010).

VicForests Coupe Management Prescriptions:

- No harvesting, silvicultural or roading activities are permitted within any area designated as VicForests Reserved Habitat Area;
- There are no restrictions on harvesting, silvicultural or roading activities within the area designated as VicForests Special Management Area.

See attached map, or associated GIS shape file for more specific VFRHA and VFSMA boundary features.

Monitoring of the VicForests Special Management Plan:

- Correct application of the VicForests SMP prescription will be monitored as part of routine pre-harvest planning processes;
- Protection of the VicForests SMP will be monitored as part of mandatory post-harvest data capture and review.

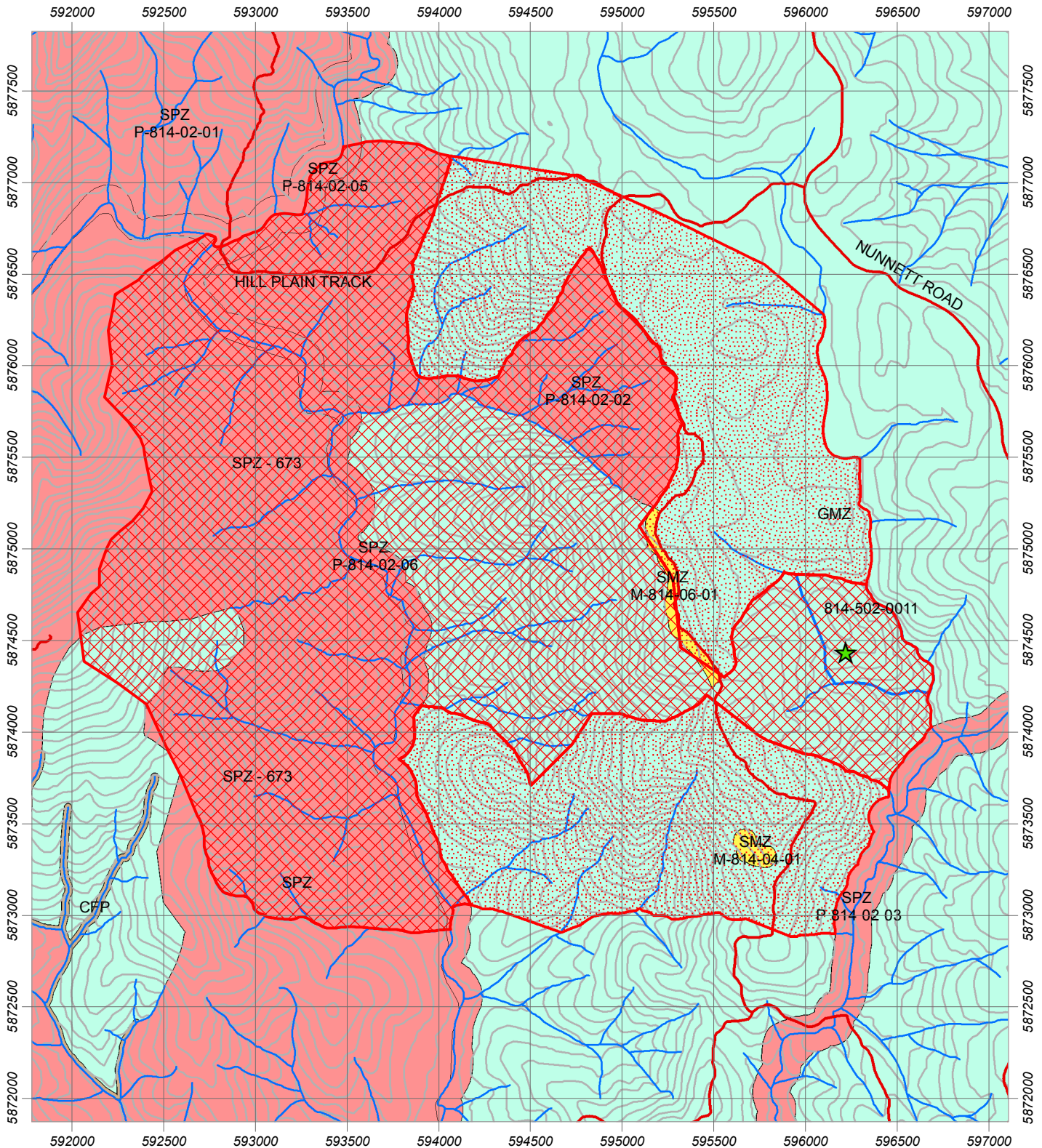
References:

- Spot-tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*) Action Statement, No. 15 (2003);
- Draft DSE Guideline (Unpublished, 2010): Application of the habitat protection guidelines for the Spot-tailed Quoll in East Gippsland;
- Aerial Photography & GIS Interpretation.

Approved by:	Title:	Conservation Biologist
Signed:	Date:	25/06/2013

Attached: VicForests Special Protection Zone Map

VICFORESTS SPOT-TAILED QUOLL SPECIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (VFSMP49)



LEGEND		Coupe Boundaries	Management Prescriptions	Map Scale 1:30,000
Land Tenure Commonwealth Other Public Land Licenced/Leased Plantations Private Land Conservation Parks and Reserves Special Protection Zone Special Management Zone General Management Zone Water Bodies		Approved TRP 2009-14 Coupe Approved TRP 2009-14 Driveway Proposed TRP 2009-14 Coupe Base Features Roads Hydrology Contours	VicForests Spot-tailed Quoll Reserved Habitat Area VicForests Spot-tailed Quoll Special Management Area VicForests Survey Sightings 3rd Party Sighting Locations	 Meters Projection GDA 94 (Zone 55) Map Date: June 21, 2013

Disclaimer: This map is generated from VicForests and Victorian Government data and may be of assistance to you. However, VicForests does not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind and therefore disclaims all liability for error, loss or damage which may arise from reliance upon it.