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MEDIA RELEASE: Finally Solving Forest Conflict—Forest Management for Carbon

Forest conflict has again ignited this week in the south east in Tantawangalo State Forest near Bega, with forest protesters blockading a logging compartment after exposing environmental breaches by NSW Forestry Corporation and logging contractors.

Continued breaches of logging licences has forced the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to again investigate the state-run logging agency, Forestry Corporation of NSW, Allied Natural Wood Exports (ANWE, the Eden woodchip mill) and their logging contractors.

"Conflict in our native forests seems intractable and completely entrenched, yet a viable solution is sitting right under the NSW Government's nose—the natural capital asset of carbon," Dr Bronte Somerset, spokesperson for the Great Southern Forest said. She added, "The National Parks Association (NPA) plan, that would reserve over 400,000 ha of native forest for carbon storage instead of logging, is a paradigm shift in forest conservation in the south east of New South Wales."

"The GSF is a new direction in managing biodiversity rich public native forests in the southern forest region of NSW that would see an end to the ongoing tug of war between conservationist and the destructive harvesting of our forests," Somerset went on to say. She added, "Carbon capture, rather than wood chipping, would fund jobs in forest restoration, wildlife protection, fire preparedness and boost jobs in nature-based tourism. Forest management for carbon would most importantly help in the fight against dangerous global warming."

"After nearly forty years of forest conflict it's high time we looked for a new solution," David Gallan, President of the NPA far south coast branch said. He added, "The expiry in 2019 and 2021 of the two Regional Forest Agreements covering the south east creates a perfect opportunity to re-evaluate loss-making logging, end the long running conflict between the forest industry and conservationists, and, by moving to environmentally sustainable uses, provide long term job security for forestry workers and conserve biodiversity."

Somerset concluded, "Continued breaches of environmental regulations by Forestry Corporation, short logging cycles and the loss of breeding hollows are dramatically degrading native forest biodiversity and increasing the risk of wildfires. Yet the economic and environmental wins of the GSF are crystal clear. Three major conservation groups in the south east support the GSF proposal as a revolutionary way forward for ending the damaging forest conflicts of the region, for tackling climate change, for ensuring forest conservation, and the underpinning of long-term, sustainable jobs in our region.

Further information please contact David Gallan, National Parks Association, or Dr Bronte Somerset, Great Southern Forest. contact@greatsouthernforest.org.au

Brief: http://www.greatsouthernforest.org.au/media/GSF_Brief.pdf

Resource materials: <http://www.greatsouthernforest.org.au/resources.html>