

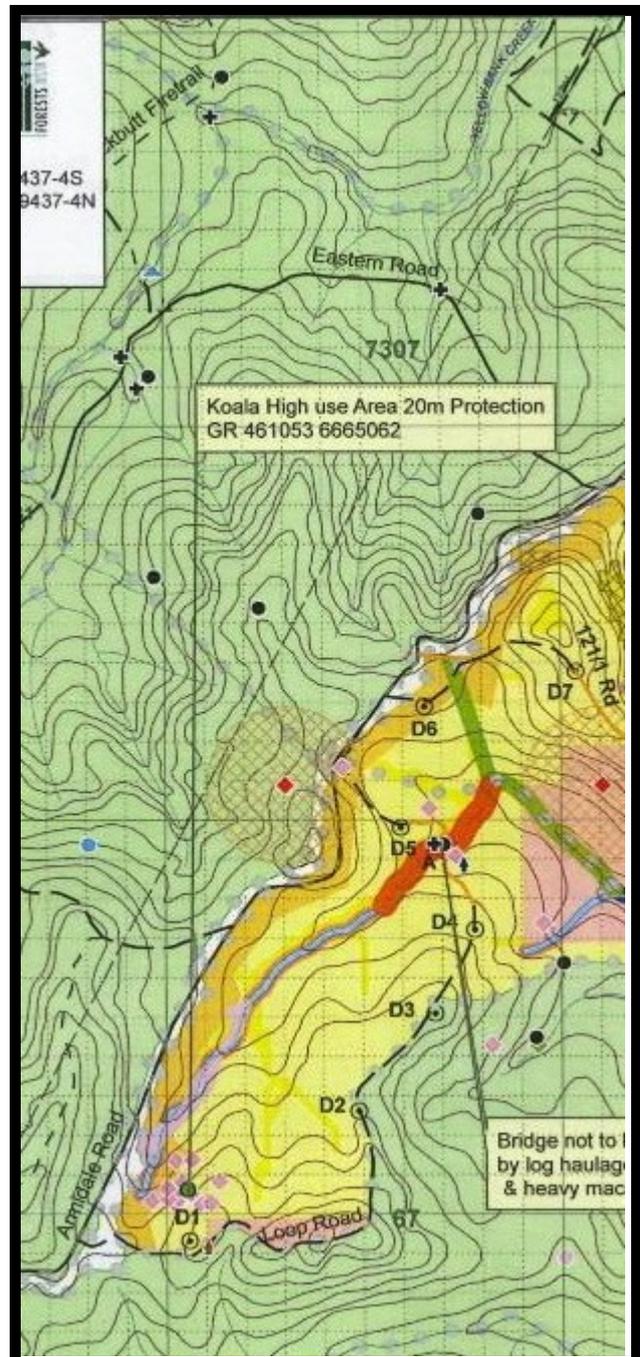
Unbelievable destruction of Koala habitat Forests NSW under the spotlight again

21st July 2012

The map at right shows Compartment 120 of Clouds Creek State Forest where logging has just been completed, and comes from the official Forests NSW Operational Harvest Plan.

As is clearly shown at the lower left hand corner at log dump 1 (D1), there is a cluster of lilac coloured diamonds that are Koala records. The boxed sign identifies that area as a Koala high use area which, under the Threatened Species Licence prescription, should be protected, a protection that includes a 20m buffer zone.

Well, below is what Forests NSW has done to that habitat.



That one to two hectare area is surrounded by exclusion zones. The standing trees in the background are growing in an unmapped drainage line which is indicated by the 'kinks' in the contour lines running north north east from D1. To the left (out of frame) there is a "special management zone" that cannot be logged, because the Government wants to maintain a screen to prevent people driving along the Armidale Road from seeing the logging damage. The remainder has been heavily logged, including some old-growth trees.



Standing background vegetation left of centre is special roadside management zone. Right of centre is a drainage line.

Tallowwoods are probably the the primary feed tree species at the site, and only about 4 were left standing in the 1 to 2 hectare logged area, and the only concession made to Koalas is the “K” painted on one of them (at left of picture).

The Threatened Species Licence requires:

“A minimum of ten hollow-bearing trees must be retained per two hectares of net logging area. Where this density is not available, the existing hollow-bearing trees must be retained plus additional trees must be retained to meet the requirement of ten per two hectares.

i. The additional trees retained must be those with the largest diameter at breast height.

ii. Retained, hollow-bearing trees must be selected from the trees with the largest dbhob and must be live trees and should have good crown development and minimal butt damage.

iii. Retained hollow-bearing trees must represent the range of hollow-bearing species that occur in the area. Preference should be given to selecting those species or trees which are most suitable for the threatened species known or likely to occur in the area.

iv. Trees retained outside the net logging area must not be counted as hollow-bearing trees. Stags (dead trees) must not be counted as hollow-bearing trees.

v. Hollow-bearing trees must be scattered throughout the net logging area”

We assert that, under the above conditions and assuming the area was only one hectare in area, there should have been at least 5 trees marked with “H” (hollow-bearing tree, marked for retention). Under the Licence, there should also have been at least 5 trees marked (R), for 'recruitment habitat tree'.

We found only two marked trees (pictured below)!



While at the same time we found a number of freshly logged stumps that were clearly old trees that would have contained hollows and should have been retained. The stump pictured above is also a Tallowwood, a preferred koala feed tree.



Is it any wonder that the Koala is rapidly heading towards extinction in this state?

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