

MEDIA RELEASE: LOGGING INDUSTRY PUTS FAR SOUTH COAST AT GREATER RISK OF EXTREME FIRES PRUE ACTON 05.12.2011

Far South Coast communities are at greater risk of fire because of native forest logging, according to new research to be presented at a forum in Bermagui next Friday.

Melbourne scientist Chris Taylor will be in the region this week to look at local forests and talk about his findings on the relationship between land use and fire intensity, based on his studies of the tragic Victorian bushfires. He will present his evidence, that the most intense fires occurred in grassland, plantations and logged forests, and that unlogged forests were the most resilient to fire and where the fires were finally halted, at a forum that is being hosted by the South East Region Conservation Alliance, Friends of Five Forests and the South East chapter of the NSW National Trust.

South East Region Conservation Alliance (SERCA) Spokesperson Prue Acton said, "I urge all people living in this region to come and hear the evidence Chris will present, so that we will all have a clearer understanding of the fire risk the industry is placing upon us, especially when current logging is occurring right on the boundaries of communities up and down the coast.

"Tilba was very nearly wiped out when the 'control burn' on Gulaga got away. Bermagui has seen the additional devastation recently inflicted on its doorstep, the gateway to the so-called Wilderness Coast.

People in Tathra and living in and around the Tanja forest have only just received a temporary reprieve until the end of summer.

"Government-contracted loggers are due to go into the Yurammie State

Forest, near Wyndham, any day, ignoring strong community protests against this logging which threatens its only water supply.

"We know now from Chris Taylor's research and that of the ANU's David Lindenmayer, that decades of over-logging in this region has not only caused irreparable damage to the forests, their wildlife and water supplies, as well as contributing to global warming, but is also making the communities around these areas much more vulnerable to fire.

"Let's not leave it until a tragedy happens, let's get rid of this dangerous, unsustainable and uneconomic industry once and for all."

- Other speakers at the forum will include conservationist Virginia Young who will outline the role of natural forests in the climate, carbon and water cycles, and the international negotiations on forest carbon policies, including the expected Australian position on measuring logging emissions in the December round.
- Former NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service employee Jamie Shaw will speak about the recent campaign against logging Tanja forest and the increased bushfire threat from logging on the very edges of townships like Bermagui and Tathra.
- Chair of the Gulaga National Park Board of Management Iris White will speak on Aboriginal perspectives on the regional forests, their cultural significance, and hopes for enlargement of the National Park boundaries to take in all the coastal forests.

Following the forum will be a film by Australian David Warth, *Rain Forest – the Secret of Life*, filmed on Mt Warning, and one of six films from around the world chosen by the United Nations to celebrate the International Year of Forests.

Perfect for Christmas, Yarramie calendars, Richard Green's iconic Forest Connections cards and prints and Natural Forests exhibition postcards will be available, with all profits going towards protecting forests.

Where Bermagui Community Hall, Friday 9 December, 7-9.30pm.

Hall opens at 6.30pm.

For interviews contact:

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