



# Rainforest Alliance

*SmartWood Program*

Public Briefing Paper for

## **Forest Management FSC Annual Audit 2012 of Australian Bluegum Plantations Pty Ltd. (ABP) in Australia.**

**February 3, 2012**

**Introduction** - The SmartWood Program of the Rainforest Alliance is conducting the forest management Annual Audit 2012 of Australian Blue Gum Plantations Pty Ltd. (ABP). The forest area under the scope of this certificate (SW-FM/CoC – 001327) is located across the border between Victoria and South Australia (Green Triangle) and in the southwest of Western Australia, with a total area of approximately 102,956 ha.

At this Annual Audit 2012, the audit team will visit a sample of sites in Western Australia state from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of March of 2012.

**Scope of the Annual Audit 2012** - The forest management certification audit will assess the environmental, silvicultural and socioeconomic aspects of the forests and plantations managed by Australian Bluegum Plantations, using the *Rainforest Alliance/SmartWood Interim Standard for Assessing Forest Management in Australia (version June 2008)* and *FM-35 SmartWood Chain-of-Custody Standard for Forest Management Enterprises (FMEs) February 2009*. To obtain a copy of the applicable guidelines or to make comments about these standards, please contact SmartWood by telephone, fax, email or website listed below. Please note that the standard may be modified to take account of stakeholder comments. SmartWood is accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and this audit process must follow procedures which have been approved by the FSC.

The forest under evaluation contains areas either identified as High Conservation Value Forests or where high conservation values, as defined by the FSC, are likely found. In particular, belonging to the Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems (HCV3), Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control) and Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities) (HCV6). SmartWood evaluates the identification, management and protection of these High Conservation Values and solicits related comments from stakeholders

**Audit Team Composition** - The audit team will be led by Mr. Addis Tsehaye, (PhD & MSc Forestry) and include Chris Weston (BSc PhD Botany).

**Audit Steps and Schedule** - Following is a short description of the certification process and a tentative agenda:

- ◆ Audit organization – The SmartWood team will assemble at the Australian Bluegum Plantations Albany main office on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March, 2012.
- ◆ Field visits – The team will visit sites managed by Australian Bluegum Plantations from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of March, 2012
- ◆ Stakeholder consultation – Throughout the fieldwork, the team will contact local stakeholders regarding Australian Bluegum Plantations forest management in towns surrounding the forest area. This may include private interviews and discussions, and public stakeholder meetings.
- ◆ Final audit briefing – Prior to departure the team will meet with Australian Bluegum Plantations managers and other parties to finalize their data collection and present preliminary findings.
- ◆ Draft report production – The audit team will produce a confidential draft report that will be circulated for comment to Australian Bluegum Plantations and a minimum of two SW reviewers.
- ◆ Certification decision – Upon receipt of comments on the draft report from Australian Bluegum Plantations forest managers and reviewers, and other general stakeholder comments through March, SmartWood will reach a certification decision. Barring unforeseen obstacles, this should occur by April 2012.

**Your Input Sought** - As a part of the forest certification process we invite stakeholders to offer comment and feedback on Australian Bluegum Plantations forest management in relation to compliance with the requirements of the forest management standard referenced above as well as comments on the FME's management and protection of High conservation Values within the forest under evaluation. We welcome input, either public or confidential, in whatever form is easiest and most secure for you. Your input will be valuable at any stage of the process, but we would prefer to receive your comments either prior to the Audit, during the Audit, or prior to 10<sup>th</sup> of March so that we can take them into consideration in reaching a certification decision. Your options for communicating your observations to us are as follows:

1. Meet with a SmartWood audit team member during or shortly after the fieldwork. Please, contact SmartWood Task Manager Maria R Gismero, the SmartWood person responsible for coordinating this audit from Asia Pacific Regional Office, for arrangements.
2. Call and give comments to Anita Neville, Representative and Communications Advisor for the Rainforest Alliance in Australia. If this person is not in the office, please contact SW Task Manager, Maria R Gismero.
3. Submit written comments by mail, FAX or email to Anita Neville. Unless you request otherwise, these comments will be kept confidential and are solely for the purposes of assessing Australian Bluegum Plantations.

The source of any information provided will be kept confidential available to only the FSC and SmartWood staff.

Stakeholders who may wish to dispute any aspect of the forest certification process or decision can access SmartWood's Complaints, Appeals and Dispute resolution procedures at [www.rainforest-allaince.org](http://www.rainforest-allaince.org),

### **Contacting SmartWood**

- ◆ Email: [aneville.consultant@ra.org](mailto:aneville.consultant@ra.org) for Representative and Communications Advisor for the Rainforest Alliance in Australia
- ◆ Email: [mgismero.consultant@ra.org](mailto:mgismero.consultant@ra.org) for Australia FM Task Manager
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- ◆ Worldwide Website: [www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org).
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