

Busting the myth about driving in state forests

State forests are often seen as a recreational playground for four-wheel-drive weekend warriors and trail bike enthusiasts.

Dirt-bike riders and off-road adventurers enjoy exploring the web of undulating tracks found within a mosaic of natural landscape.

What these drivers and riders may not know is roads and tracks within state forests have a speed limit and normal road rules apply.

“Although there is no signage in the area, the speed limits and road laws are the same as the open road.”

In Beerburrum State Forest, an hour north of Brisbane, logging trucks carry heavy loads throughout 270 square kilometres of pine plantation on roads specifically built for the logging industry.

Within this plantation area, a vast network of tracks used for fire



Senior Sergeant Ken Otte, Officer in Charge of Beerwah Division, said it was a common misconception that state forest tracks were not public roads and that rules did not apply.

“There have been six crashes and two fatalities in state forests in the Beerwah Division on the Sunshine Coast during the past year,” Senior Sergeant Otte said.

“I believe the primary reason for this is drivers and riders are not obeying the road rules. Some are not even licensed.

fighting and access purposes are also used by recreational drivers and trail bike riders, sometimes at great risk.

The Beerburrum forestry areas are run by Forestry Plantation Queensland (FPQ), a Queensland Government-owned corporation.

FPQ has met with police about the damage to roads, tracks, and off-road plantations caused by recreational vehicles and as a result are formulating a joint initiative to educate the public in safe driving and riding techniques.

Senior Sergeant Otte said Beerwah police ran regular patrol operations in Beerwah forestry areas targeting unregistered and unlicensed drivers.

“During a recent operation, 28 drivers and riders were stopped, and cautions were issued for a variety of offences,” he said.

“At the moment we are focusing on educating drivers but a time will come when cautioning will cease and enforcement action will be taken.

“This action could eventually result in the confiscation of vehicles and court appearance for offenders.”

*By Karen Downey,
Media and Public Affairs Branch*

Tips for driving on forest roads:

- all normal road rules apply on forest tracks and roads
- all drivers and riders are to be licensed
- speed limits are not advertised—be aware the open speed limit applies except where otherwise signed
- watch out for the unexpected—slow down to allow time to react to changed road conditions
- be aware of logging operations—heavy machinery such as log trucks and commercial forestry machinery may be in use within forestry areas at certain times
- avoid driving on unsealed roads during and after heavy rain
- restricted access roads are indicated by signs and road users must comply
- make sure all passengers wear seatbelts at all times and stay inside the vehicle
- bike riders should always wear protective gear
- keep left, especially at sharp bends and crests
- watch out for washouts, scoured road shoulders and loose surfaces
- be aware of wet weather—some roads become impassable even to four-wheel-drive vehicles