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CONCERN OVER ILLEGAL REMOVAL OF FIREWOOD

With the onset of winter, the Crown Lands Division of NSW Trade & Investment has raised concerns about people illegally cutting down trees and removing firewood from Crown land reserves and roadsides.

Last winter there were a number of incidents of trees being removed from the Albury Environmental Lands which are preserved for habitat of threatened species.

Richard Ahearn, Crown Land's Senior Project Officer for the Albury Environmental Lands, said the taking of trees was removing important habitat for many native species.

"Even taking dead timber lying on the ground removes important habitat for ground dwelling species such as lizards and some frogs.

"We are trying to restore and manage the natural environment to improve these habitats. It is very disappointing when our efforts are hindered by people cutting down important trees and removing logs."

Sam Niedra of the Albury Conservation Company supports Mr Ahearn's concerns and cited examples where trees containing nest boxes have been cut down.

"Many nest boxes have been placed in trees through Thurgoona to provide for various species, particularly squirrel gliders," Mr Niedra said.

Albury City's Vegetation Management Officer Steve Onley said the illegal collection of firewood wasn't contained to Crown Lands as people have also been collecting firewood from Council-managed lands.

"The illegal removal of firewood is a really damaging activity and is a major setback to our revegetation efforts," he said.

"We have a long term plan to manage and protect sites that promote biodiversity and have been identified as environmentally significant. We'd urge people to stay out of these areas and source their firewood from approved outlets."

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