



Golden Triangle

BMP Informer

Serving Hardin, Jefferson and Orange Counties

Updating FOREST LANDOWNERS on Forestry and Water Quality Issues

TEXAS FOREST SERVICE Best Management Practices Project P.O. Box 310 Lufkin, TX 75902 sharrington@tfs.tamu.edu

Since 1991 the Texas Forest Service has conducted six rounds of BMP implementation monitoring. During each round a minimum of 150 randomly chosen tracts are inspected for the implementation of BMP's with the cooperation of the landowner. Once all the tracts have been inspected the data that was collected is used to produce a report which shows how well BMP's are being used.

Starting in January 2007 the Texas Forest Service will begin its seventh round of BMP implementation monitoring. Over the next year and a half the Texas Forest Service will randomly select a minimum of 150 tracts and with the cooperation of the landowner evaluate them for the implementation of BMP's. In 2008 the seventh report will be released showing the overall findings of the inspections. Hopefully we will continue to see an increase in the implementation rates and see a decrease in the number of deficiencies.

All previous reports can be found on the Texas Forest Service website at <http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/sustainable/article.aspx?id=710&>. You can look at each report and see how far we have come over the years in the implementation of BMP's but also see the areas in which we still need to improve. If you have any questions about the BMP implementation reports or BMP's in general please feel free to call me at (936) 639-8180 or email me at sharring-

Timber Sale Contract Basics

By: Shane Harrington, BMP Forester, Texas Forest Service

Today there are many reasons why a landowner chooses to harvest his or her timber. A landowner may choose to harvest timber in order to increase forest productivity, forest health concerns, salvage storm damaged timber, or there may be financial considerations as to why they harvest.

Timber sale contracts play an important role when conducting any timber sale. These contracts provide a set of guidelines for the sale to operate under but most importantly a timber sale contract protects the interests of both the buyer and seller. When having a timber sale contract prepared there are few basic points that should be included in the contract.

- Name, address, and signature of all parties involved in the timber sale
 - Legal description of the property along with maps showing property boundaries and harvest area
 - Date of execution (length of time given to the buyer to harvest the timber, typically in the south 18 months is adequate)
 - Payment schedule (will this be a lump sum or pay as cut timber sale)
 - Penalty to buyer if unmarked trees are harvested
- Best Management Practices (BMPs)

BMPs should always be included in timber sale contracts because it may be necessary to spell out specific practices such as where and how to cross streams, where to place roads and skid trails, and when work should be halted due to wet weather.

Before conducting any timber sale you should always consult with a professional forester who can assist you with your sale. A professional forester as well as most attorneys can also write you a timber sale contract. Once you have a timber sale contract written make sure you review it and understand everything that is outlined in the contract. Keep in mind that these are only a few of the points that should be included in a timber sale contract and thus why it is very important that you seek assistance from a professional forester. If you would like more information on timber sale contracts please contact me at (936) 639-8180 or contact your local Texas Forest Service office.

Texas Water Facts Texas Water Resources

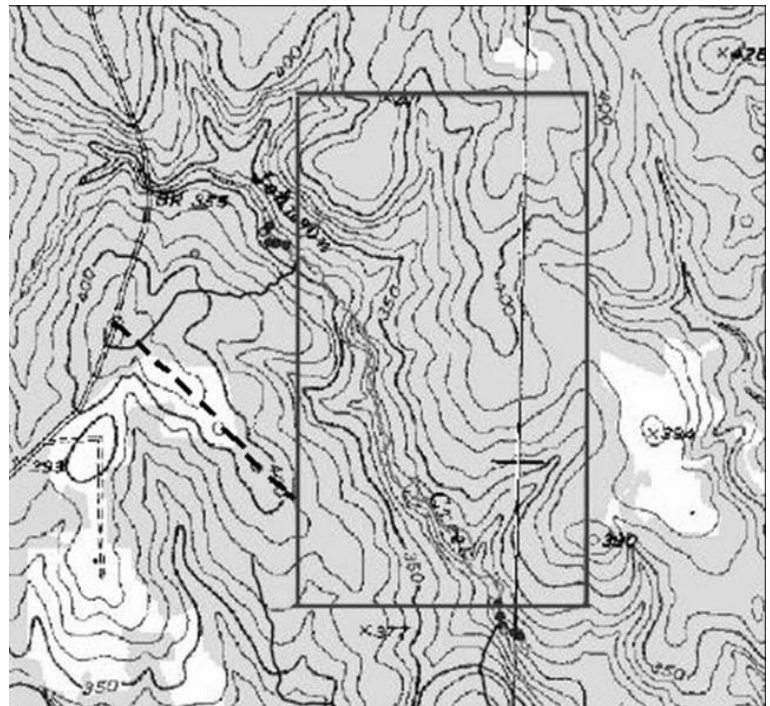
- In Texas, water rights depend on whether the water is groundwater or surface water. Generally, Texas groundwater belongs to the landowner. Groundwater is governed by the rule of capture, which grants landowners the right to capture the water beneath their property. The landowners do not own the water but have a right only to pump and capture whatever water is available, regardless of the effects of that pumping on neighboring wells. Surface water, on the other hand, belongs to the state of Texas. It can be used by a landowner only with the state's permission.
- Of all water used in Texas, about 60% is groundwater; the other 40% is surface water.
- In the next 25 years, the fastest growing groups of water users are projected to be cities and industries. By the 2040's, cities and industries will use more water than agriculture.
- Texas has about 6700 dams and reservoirs.
- Statewide, there are about 32 Texas aquifers. Nine aquifers provide 97% of the groundwater we use.
- About 80% of the groundwater used is for irrigating agricultural land. There are 6.3 million acres of irrigated agricultural land.
- The Ogallala Aquifer, West Texas High Plains, provides about 2/3 of all groundwater used in Texas.
- Texans use 16.5 million acre/feet of water per year. An acre/foot of water is enough to cover one acre of land, one foot deep....325,851 gallons.

Improving My Land

Harvest Planning

Planning is often the most overlooked yet most important part of any harvest activity. Potential sources of sedimentation can often be avoided with proper planning. There are several tools available to help with planning – you may want to visit with your logger or forester about using these sources of information.

Even though you may have a good feel for the lay of your land, a topographic map provides great information to discuss placement of any new access roads. Topographic (“topo”) maps are produced by the US Geological Survey (USGS) and show land contours and elevation.



Not only are topo maps practical, but they can also reveal interesting facts such as elevations of points of interest. This hilltop near Greasy Creek, just west of LaFayette, is 376 feet above sea level.

Other tools to help you, your forester and your logger in harvest planning are county soil surveys and aerial photos. Soil surveys, available from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), can give the specific soil name and characteristics found on your tract. Aerial photos, available from appraisal districts, TFS offices, and Farm Services offices, can give you a bird's-eye view of your land.

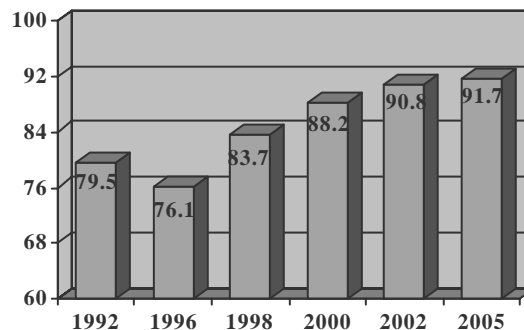
Texas' Forestry Best Management Practices Report Card – Results from 15 years of BMP Implementation Monitoring in Texas

A soon-to-be released report by the Texas Forest Service titled “A History of Forestry BMP Implementation Monitoring in Texas”, documents the tremendous gains that have been made in Best Management Practices (BMP) implementation over the years. “The results show that the forestry community has truly embraced the importance of using BMPs to protect water quality,” said Hughes Simpson, Texas BMP coordinator.

The report covers results from the past 15 years of BMP implementation monitoring in which a total of 904 sites in East Texas were evaluated on public, industrial, TIMO, and private lands. By measuring the progress that has been made since the initial survey, strengths and weaknesses have been determined, so that future educational efforts can be focused on those areas needing the most improvement.

Since the monitoring program began in the early 1990s, overall BMP implementation rates have increased by over 20% to an all time high of 91.7%. Even greater strides have been made in traditional problem areas – temporary roads (+56%), stream crossings (+43%), and streamside management zones or SMZ's (+28%).

Overall Percent BMP Implementation, 1992-2005



Family forest landowners, long considered the critical link to protecting water quality, have led most of the recent advancement. Tremendous gains have been made on private land, most notably on temporary roads (+68%), site preparation (+59%), stream crossings (+58%), and SMZs (+42%). Their overall BMP implementation rate also increased significantly (+29%) and is at an all time high of 88.6%.

In order to continue to improve implementation of BMPs, the Texas Forest Service will offer several new courses that focus on stream crossings, forest roads and SMZs through the Texas Forestry Association's Pro Logger continuing education program.

“The dramatic improvements shown by this report really demonstrate the effectiveness of the Texas Forest Service BMP program as well as the forestry community's commitment to environmental stewardship,” said Simpson.

To learn more about BMPs, visit the Texas Forest Service webpage at <http://txforests-service.tamu.edu/sustainable/bmp>

Distribution of the *Golden Triangle BMP Informer* is provided free of charge to forest landowners of Hardin, Jefferson and Orange Counties. Funding has been provided through cooperation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) and the Texas Forest Service (TFS). PLEASE ADVISE US IF YOU WISH FOR YOUR NAME TO BE REMOVED FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

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Federal and State Agency Websites

Environmental Protection Agency	www.epa.gov
Farm Services Agency	www.fsa.usda.gov
Natural Resource Conservation Service	www.nrcs.usda.gov
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	www.tceq.state.tx.us
Texas Forest Service	http://txforestservation.tamu.edu
Texas Forestry Association	www.texasforestry.org
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	www.tpwd.state.tx.us
Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board	www.tsswcb.state.tx.us