



Sam Rayburn

BMP Informer

Serving Nacogdoches and San Augustine 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

From the Editor . . .

A forest landowner's right to manage his/her property as he/she chooses is of the utmost importance. Forest landowners have either purchased their land with hard-earned money or have acquired it from family members who purchased the land long ago.

Landowners have earned the right and should always have the right to manage their property in the manner that best fits their goals. However, these rights are accompanied by responsibilities.

Responsibilities include protecting water quality for future generations. Texas' non-regulatory BMPs allow landowners the opportunity to be a steward of the land and avoid prohibitive government regulations.

BMPs are simple, inexpensive practices that protect land from erosion and maintain stream quality.

Did you know . . .

Losing a layer of soil the thickness of one dime across one acre (about the size of a football field including the end zones) amounts to losing 10,000 lbs. (5 tons) of soil per acre?

Texas Forestry Best Management Practices Handbook Revised

The Texas Forest Service and members of the Texas Forestry Association's Best Management Practices (BMP) Task Force recently evaluated and made revisions to the current BMP guidelines. This group, made up of private landowners, loggers, foresters, industry, academia, environmental conservation groups, and state and federal agencies, enacted these revisions in an effort to continue to improve and enhance the ability of forestry professionals to effectively protect water quality during silvicultural activities.

Texas Forestry BMPs were developed in 1989, and have undergone 3 major revisions over the past 15 years. It is important to review and update these guidelines periodically to ensure that they are still effective in protecting water quality. BMPs prevent almost 12,000 tons of dirt from entering East Texas streams annually and over 96,000 tons of dirt from eroding off East Texas forestlands. This is enough dirt to cover a football field, endzone to endzone, 30 feet high.

Several key additions have been included in the new handbook that address stream classification and basal area. The "Stream Classification" section, found under the Recommended Specifications for Streamside Management Zones (SMZs), lists characteristics that can be used in the field to distinguish between perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral streams. The "How to Calculate Basal Area" section, found in the Appendix, can be used to properly calculate the basal area in SMZs to ensure that the 50 square feet of basal area is being left.

A summary of all the revisions made to the BMP guidelines has been placed at the beginning of the new BMP handbook. You should review all of the revisions and familiarize yourself with the changes to ensure that BMPs are being implemented properly. To obtain a copy of the new BMP handbook, please visit the Texas Forest Service webpage at <http://texasforests.tamu.edu> or contact the Texas Forestry Association at (936) 632-8733. If you have any comments or questions regarding BMPs or any of these revisions please call the Texas Forest Service BMP Project Office at (936) 639-8180 or email Shane Harrington at sharrington@tfs.tamu.edu.

Certified Forest Steward

The Certified Forest Steward program will identify and reward landowners who follow a written Stewardship plan. Once you have a Stewardship plan, you can request certification or be nominated by a local resource professional, consultant, or county agent. All TFS district offices have the nomination forms. Nomination forms and an overview of the program can also be obtained on the TFS website: <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/shared/article.asp?DocumentID=472&mc=forest>.

The form requires a list of your Stewardship practices that have been installed in the last five years plus a copy of your Stewardship plan.

Each accomplishment will be awarded points based on importance to proper land management. Of course, BMPs are a part of the point system. For example, a thinning using BMPs to improve a timber stand is worth more points than fencing to manage woods grazing. Any practice that has the potential to affect water quality must use BMPs for your nomination to be considered.

If you qualify, you will be presented a certificate and a "Forest Stewardship" sign for your property at a public ceremony of your choice.

For more information about obtaining your own Stewardship plan and becoming a Certified Forest Steward, contact your local TFS district office or TFS Stewardship Coordinator Brad Barber in College Station at (979) 458-6650 or bbarber@tfs.tamu.edu.

Improving My Land

Do Your Firelanes Measure Up?

Firelanes, permanent barriers that are created to prevent the spread of fire, are important in protecting your valuable timber. Even though it has been a fairly wet year and fire danger has been relatively low, you should know the condition of your firelanes.

If you have an erosion problem on your firelanes, it is important to resolve the problem at its source. Soil erosion is usually a result of the firelane carrying too much water. For example, just filling in the washed areas is not as good as installing a water bar or other water control structure. Water bars and wing ditches work just as well on firelanes as they do on temporary roads or skid trails. When installing wing ditches, make sure that the runoff water is not being discharged directly into streams.

Seeding a firelane helps minimize erosion, as well as provides supplemental food for wildlife.



A firelane such as this needs water control structures to minimize erosion.

Proper maintenance of a firelane may include regular mowing rather than blading to minimize both fuel build-up and soil erosion. When blading is necessary, every effort should be made to minimize exposure of the bare soil.

BMP Effectiveness Monitoring

For almost 15 years, the Texas Forest Service has promoted the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to prevent or reduce the amount of water pollution when conducting forestry operations. While it is common knowledge that BMPs are an effective and practical means of mitigating forestry non-point source pollution, there is no quantifiable data to substantiate their obvious aesthetic improvements.

The Texas Forest Service recently began a stream monitoring project designed to test the effectiveness of the state recommended BMPs. Four sites under intensive forest management located in Cherokee, Houston, Jasper, and Newton Counties are undergoing rigorous habitat assessments, biological, and physiochemical monitoring before and after forestry operations. Sites were selected that encompassed the higher topography and erodibility hazards found in East Texas commercial forestlands. Each site has a designated reference (above the treatment area) and test (below the treatment area) section.

Method, frequency, and parameters that will be monitored on the four sites:

Method	Frequency	Parameters
Habitat Assessment	Twice per year (spring and fall)	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality method
Biological Sampling	Twice per year (spring and fall)	Aquatic insects, fish
Physiochemical – Grab Samples	Monthly	Dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, temperature, turbidity, total nitrogen, total phosphorous, total suspended solids
Physiochemical – Storm Samples	After storm events (15-20 storm events estimated per year)	Total nitrogen, total phosphorous, total suspended solids

Statistical analysis is performed comparing the habitat assessment, biological, and physiochemical “test” section results on each of the four project sites before and after the treatment to see if they are significantly different. This same analysis is used to test for differences between the reference and test sections within sites, so that any changes due to natural variability in the test section is not falsely attributed to a treatment effect. A final report is to be produced in June 2006 documenting the results of this 3 year project.

Distribution of the *Sam Rayburn BMP Informer* is provided free of charge to forest landowners of Nacogdoches and San Augustine 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). **If you would like for your name to be removed from our mailing list please contact Shane Harrington at (936) 639-8180 or sharrington@tfs.tamu.edu.**

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Forestry Acronyms

BMP	Best Management Practices	TCEQ	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
CFLOA	County Forest Landowner Association	TFA	Texas Forestry Association
FLEP	Forest Land Enhancement Program	TFS	Texas Forest Service
FSA	Farm Service Agency	TLC	Texas Logging Council
NIPF	Nonindustrial Private Forest (landowner)	TRe	Texas Reforestation Foundation
NPS	Nonpoint Source (pollution)	TSSWCB	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service	WHIP	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
SFI	Sustainable Forestry Initiative	WQMP	Water Quality Management Plan
SMZ	Streamside Management Zone	WRP	Wetlands Reserve Program
SPB	Southern Pine Beetle		
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation District		



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