

# BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES – A WAY TO PROTECT YOUR LAND

It is documented that well managed forests provide us with clean water. They also absorb rainfall, refill aquifers, slow and filter stormwater runoff, reduce floods, and provide habitat for fish and wildlife. Forestry operations, if done improperly, can negatively impact these benefits. Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) were developed to prevent these impacts from occurring.

Forestry BMPs are a set of guidelines that involve the application of conservation practices that effectively prevent or minimize the amount of nonpoint source pollution (NPS) generated during forestry operations. They help protect your soil and water, two key elements necessary for growing a healthy, sustainable and productive forest. BMPs can include such measures as leaving a buffer zone of trees next to a stream, installing a culvert to cross a stream, or establishing grass on forest roads to prevent erosion.

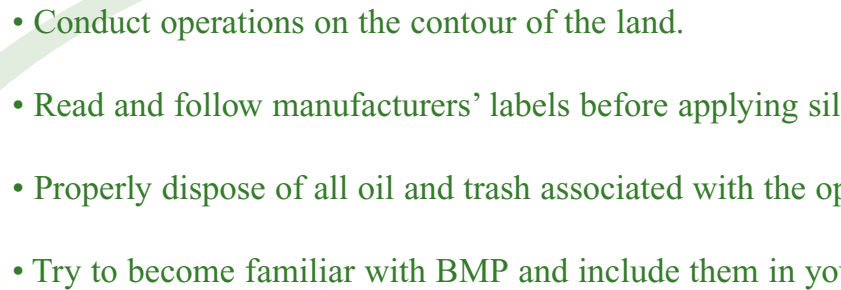
The Texas Forest Service, with cooperation from the forestry community, monitors the implementation of these guidelines by evaluating randomly selected forestry operations. Compliance with the non-regulatory BMPs has steadily risen to 92 percent, according to a 2005 survey by the Texas Forest Service.

Computer models have estimated that over the past 15 years, BMPs have prevented over 100,000 tons of dirt per year from eroding off East Texas forests, enough soil to cover a football field, end zone to end zone, 35 feet deep. These practices also kept over 12,000 tons of dirt per year out of lakes and reservoirs.

## *WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY PROPERTY?*

- Leave a 50 foot strip of trees along streams after harvesting your timber to help prevent sediment from entering streams and provide wildlife habitat.
- Install appropriate water control structures along roads to allow water to drain quickly. Stabilize and retire roads no longer in use.
- Avoid crossing streams when possible. If this is not possible, cross streams at straight sections and at right angles. Remove all temporary crossings and logging debris from channel and stabilize stream banks.
- Make sure the ground is stable enough for heavy equipment so rutting does not occur.
- When harvesting your timber, use a professional forester and choose a logger that has been trained in BMPs.

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- Conduct operations on the contour of the land.
  - Read and follow manufacturers' labels before applying silvicultural chemicals.
  - Properly dispose of all oil and trash associated with the operation.
  - Try to become familiar with BMP and include them in your timber sale contract.

In Texas, if we demonstrate *voluntarily* that we can maintain or improve our water quality while harvesting or site preparing our timberland, we may avoid the pain of mandatory restrictions. We strongly urge you to use BMPs on your operations to protect water quality. With your help we can continue our water quality improvements and ensure the sustainability of our forests for all Texans to enjoy.

For More Information:

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