



Storm Damage and Forest Health Issues in Streamside Management Zones

Forestry BMP Requirements for Streamside Management Zones can be temporarily suspended for certain catastrophic situations that have already or will threaten the forest canopy within an SMZ. These situations are:

1. Severe Storm Damage
2. Forest Health Emergency
 - a. Forest Insect infestation
 - b. Forest Pathogen (disease) infection

It is recommended that a qualified professional, i.e., Forester, Biologist, should inspect the area and verify the specific type of catastrophic situation that has occurred. It is also recommended to contact a GFC Forester to document the situation in case the GFC receives a timber harvest complaint about the site later on. Landowners, loggers, foresters, operators, contractors, etc. should make every effort to stabilize the affected SMZs and assure BMP Compliance as far as possible following any salvage removals.

STORM DAMAGE

In the case of severe storm damage, it is important to:

1. Remove as much of the downed timber from stream channels as possible
2. Leave as much residual shading as possible, given the remaining timber, if any
3. Minimize disturbance to soil and ground (forest litter) cover


In severe storm damage cases, there may be trees fallen across other trees creating a tangled situation, creating much difficulty in removing the timber, however, minimize disturbances within the SMZ as much as possible. Much of the timber may have to be chainsawed to free from a pile for removal. Also, trees still attached to the stump/root ball should be chainsawed to allow the tree stump to stay on site and hopefully return to its upright position. Remove as much of the downed timber as possible, even fallen bank trees, from the stream channel. Protect the stream bank as much as possible during the removal of the tree logs. Once tree removal is complete, it is recommended to seed exposed soils within SMZs with a seasonal vegetative cover mix. A table showing recommended seeding information can be found in the BMP manual.

FOREST HEALTH EMERGENCY

Trees can be salvaged from within an SMZ in cases where:

1. A severe forest insect infestation is present
2. A severe forest pathogen infection is present

These type salvage operations would be carried out in an attempt to eradicate the particular infestation/infection. It is recommended that a qualified professional be consulted to properly diagnose the problem and to outline steps to take to eradicate the infestation/infection. Normally, these eradication steps would include marking the area of



trees to be removed hosting the infestation/infection, including a buffer of uninfested/uninfected trees in many cases. Non-host species of trees for the particular infestation/infection should be left when it is feasible to do so. It is expected, though that host tree removal may impact many non-host species as well. Once tree removal is complete, it is recommended to seed exposed soils within SMZs with a seasonal vegetative cover mix.

Additional questions concerning these rules can be directed to your local GFC Water Quality Forester or to Scott Thackston, GFC Water Quality Program Coordinator, at 478-751-3493 or sthackston@gfc.state.ga.us.

The Best Management Practices for Forestry in Georgia manual can be downloaded at the GFC website: <http://www.gatrees.org/forest-management/water-quality/bmps/manual/>.