

GEORGIA FORESTRY  
COMMISSION



## Georgia's Best Management Practices for Forestry Georgia Trout Stream BMP's Interpretation

### **Background:**

Georgia's forestry BMP manual (revised in 1999 and 2009) recommends a 100 foot wide Streamside Management Zone, measured from the streambank horizontally outward away from the stream; to be implemented on all Georgia designated primary or secondary trout streams – *and tributaries* (p. 11 Georgia's BMPs for Forestry manual). Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) has interpreted this to mean *all intermittent* as well as perennial stream tributaries of all primary and secondary trout streams. Under this interpretation, therefore, trout streams and any intermittent or perennial tributaries to trout streams would need a 100 foot wide SMZ to comply with BMPs.

Georgia's Erosion and Sedimentation Act (12-7-6 (16) O.C.G.A.) provides for a 50 foot wide undisturbed buffer ".....along the banks of all state waters classified as trout streams, provided that small springs and streams classified as trout streams which discharge an annual flow of 25 gallons per minute or less shall have a 25 foot buffer or they may be piped...." Thus, small trout streams and tributaries with less than 25 g/min annual average flow are treated differently than primary and secondary trout streams under state law. Therefore, it appears that Georgia's BMPs for Forestry are actually more stringent than Georgia's Erosion and Sedimentation Act as regards trout streams, especially small trout streams and tributaries.

### **Revised interpretation:**

GFC recommends that Forestry BMPs for intermittent trout streams and intermittent trout stream tributaries be congruent with state law treatment of such streams. Under this interpretation, SMZ recommendations should be as follows: Perennial Trout Streams and perennial tributaries should continue to have the 100 foot wide SMZs, option 1 or option 2, as described in Georgia's BMPs for Forestry manual, pp. 11-12.

Intermittent trout streams and intermittent trout stream tributaries should have a 35 foot or 50 foot wide SMZ, depending on valley slopes, according to the SMZ recommendations for slope on p. 9 of the BMP manual. (Note that the SMZ width of 20 feet corresponding to minimal stream valley slopes (0 to 20% slopes) is not recommended. In the event such minimal slopes are encountered in a trout stream watershed, use the 35 foot SMZ width.)

Residual basal area requirements should continue to be at least 50 ft.<sup>2</sup>/ac or higher for any trout stream or tributary within the SMZs of such trout streams or tributaries.