

WHAT CAN I DO?

Specify Use of BMPs in Forest Practice Contracts

Sample contracts are available from the GFC. Written plans that can be attached to a contract as an addendum are recommended to prevent confusion between parties.

Learn about BMPs

Understand the BMPs that apply to your practices. This will allow you to know what is right and what is wrong.

Request an Exam

If you are planning a timber harvest or other silvicultural activity, contact the GFC for information regarding the work history of the timber buyer or operator. Also ask for a free Assurance Exam. Starting early can prevent possible problems before they happen.

Consider Your Neighbors Downstream

Your runoff and sediment may not seem like much, but the cumulative effects downstream can be serious.

Get Involved with Local Watershed Planning

You can make a difference in your area by attending local meetings and making sure your concerns are considered.



**P. O. Box 819
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1-800-GA-TREES
GaTrees.org**

The Georgia Forestry Commission provides leadership, service and education in the protection and conservation of Georgia's forest resources.

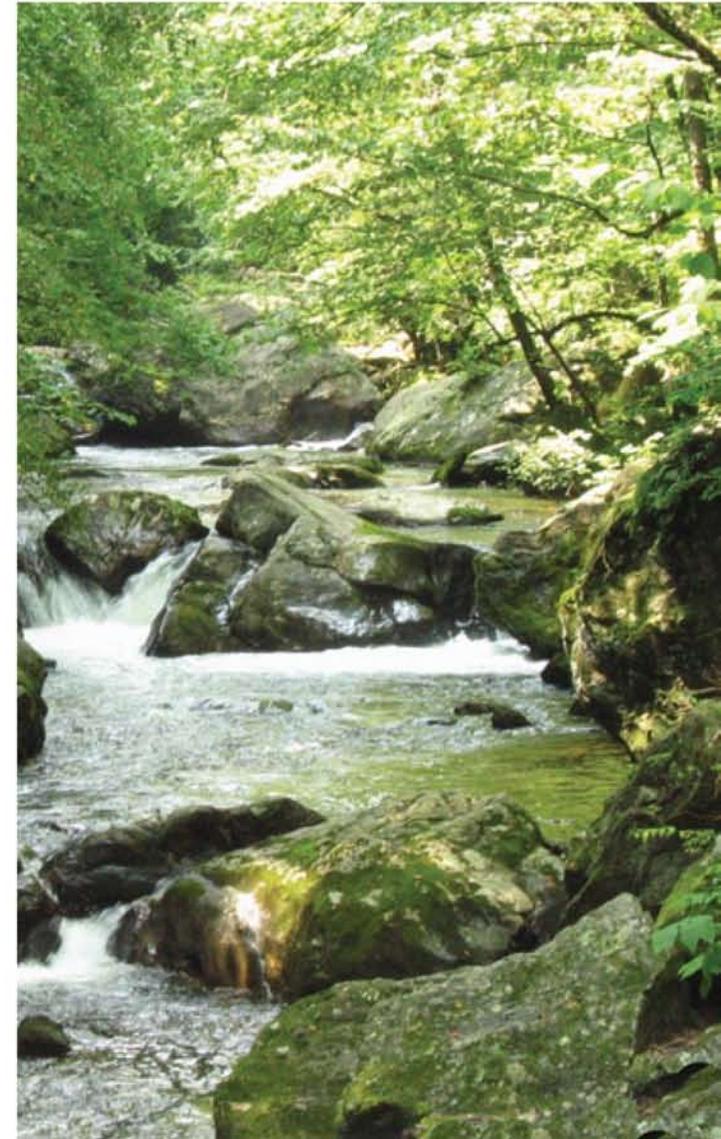
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Georgia's Best Management Practices for Forestry

Assurance Examinations



BACKGROUND

Clean Water Act (CWA)

The 1972 Federal Clean Water Act requires each state to develop a plan to protect its waters from all sources of pollution. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) designated the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) as the lead agency to develop a forestry water quality program to keep sediment from entering Georgia streams.

Best Management Practices (BMPs)

In 1981, recommendations to minimize or reduce soil erosion while conducting forestry practices were first developed. These BMPs were revised in 2009.

Education

The GFC's main role in the program is educating the forestry community on BMPs through workshops and field demonstrations.

Complaints

The GFC also investigates and mediates complaints involving forestry operations on behalf of the EPD and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.



Healthy forests prevent soil erosion and improve water quality.



BMPs help protect habitat of fish and other aquatic life.

BMP Monitoring

In order to determine if BMP educational efforts have been effective, as well as the BMPs themselves, the GFC conducts frequent statewide surveys. Previous surveys and studies have concluded that water quality, including aquatic habitat and overall stream health, benefit when BMPs are applied.

CURRENT ISSUES

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

The CWA requires states to identify streams not meeting state water quality standards (impaired streams) and to set priorities for cleaning them up by establishing TMDLs. TMDL is the maximum amount of a pollutant, such as sediment, that a stream can receive and still be safe and healthy.

During the next five years, over 1,100 TMDLs will be developed for Georgia's rivers, streams, and lakes. Once the TMDLs are established, a TMDL implementation plan must be prepared and implemented. The implementation plan may require landowners to use BMPs to bring the stream into compliance with water quality

standards that have been violated. It will also involve detailed monitoring of these practices to document reasonable assurance that BMPs are being implemented and are effective.

Assurance Examinations

The GFC will be conducting field examinations of active forestry operations in these designated watersheds in an effort to document the "reasonable assurance" requirement that streams are being protected. This is a proactive program that aims to educate landowners and provide on-the-ground assistance to forest operators shortly after the practice begins and before problems occur.

Landowners and forest operators may request an examination on their properties by contacting any of the GFC offices.

By implementing this proactive program, the GFC hopes to protect the state's streams and avoid any further regulations on forest landowners.



GFC foresters conduct assurance exams to help landowners protect water quality.