Reasonable BMP Expectations

Forest landowners, primarily those who have not harvested timber before, are often unaware of the outcomes associated with these operations, including the use of environmental practices, or Best Management Practices (BMPs). Knowing what to expect or stipulate in contracts can help prevent misunderstandings and hard feelings, as well as protect the health and productivity of your forestland for future rotations. Remember, the more demands you place on your contractor, the less income you will receive from the operation, so a balancing act is critical. Listed below are some reasonable BMP expectations that forest landowners should have regarding operations conducted on their property.

- **Roads should be left in good condition.** Forest roads should be reshaped if necessary and stabilized to prevent erosion from occurring. Ditches and water control structures should not direct runoff into streams. However, it should not be expected that these roads will look like interstate highways.

- **Water resources should be protected.** Buffers, or streamside management zones (SMZs), should be left along streams and other sensitive areas. Careful, selective harvesting may be done, however roads, landings, and firebreaks should be located outside of these areas. Equipment and logging debris should be kept out of stream channels if possible.

- **Streams should be crossed appropriately.** If stream crossings cannot be avoided, minimizing the number of crossings as well as utilizing proper methods can help. Crossings should be designed to consider the intended traffic, duration, and hydrological characteristics of the stream. Dirt crossings should not be used.

- **Operations should be halted when the tract is too wet.** Rutting caused from operating during wet conditions can lead not only to impacts to water quality, but site productivity as well. Operations should cease when significant rutting is evident.

- **Trash generated from the operation should be disposed properly.** Tires, hydraulic fluid containers, batteries, and seedling bags should be properly disposed of and not left on site.

- **Operations should be conducted on the contour.** Conducting operations on the contour can significantly reduce the amount of erosion, especially during mechanical site preparation.

- **Chemicals should be kept out of waterways.** Herbicides and fertilizers should not be applied directly to waterbodies. Equipment should be serviced away from streams.

Following these recommendations during forest operations can help protect the health and productivity of your forestland for future generations.

For more information regarding Forestry Best Management Practices please visit [http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/BMP](http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/BMP) or contact your local Texas Forest Service office.