

THE TEXAS WATER SOURCE

UPDATING HARDIN, JEFFERSON & ORANGE CO. FOREST LANDOWNERS ON FORESTRY AND WATER ISSUES

Who Is Using Best Management Practices?

Texas Forest Service recently completed the eighth round of Best Management Practices (BMP) Implementation Monitoring. This was done to see how well BMPs are being used in the field. Forestry BMPs are common-sense practices that help reduce soil erosion and protect water quality.

Sites on which forestry operations had occurred were randomly selected and evaluated for the presence, where applicable, and functionality of BMPs. Sites that are monitored are only done with landowner consent.

Overall BMP implementation on sites monitored was 94.1%. National Forest sites had an overall implementation of 98.3%, while industrial sites had a 97.7% implementation rating. Corporate lands (commercial landowners

that do not have wood processing facilities) scored 96.7% overall, while family forest owners scored 88.0%.

Implementation of BMPs was statistically higher when:

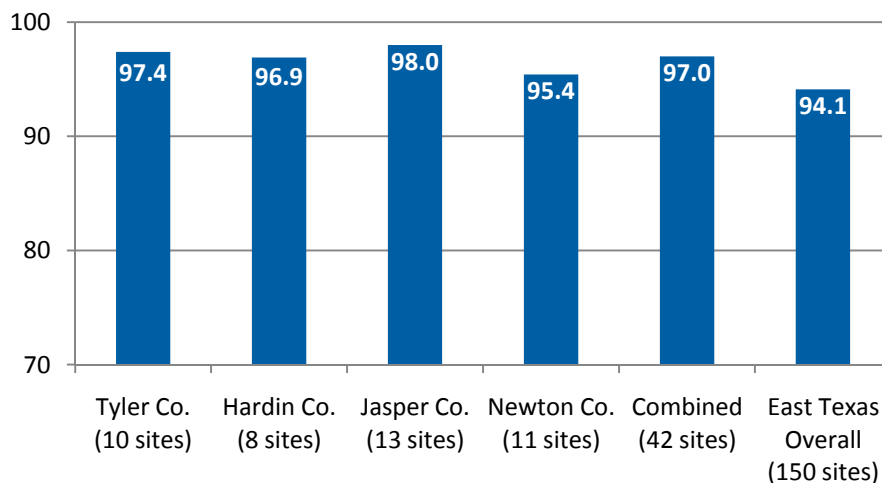
- the landowner was familiar with BMPs
- the logging contractor had attended formal BMP training
- a forester was involved in the sale or activity
- BMPs were included in the timber sale contract

The use of BMPs in Texas is voluntary. Improvements continue to be seen, and can be furthered if we recognize the importance of using BMPs to protect water quality.

For more information:

- <http://texasforestservic.e.tamu.edu/BMP>; look under *Publications* for the latest implementation report and earlier reports.

Local BMP Implementation



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Organization Spotlight

Sustainable Forestry Initiative®

For more information:

- <http://www.texasforestry.org/programs/initiative/>
- <http://www.sfiprogram.org/>

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)® is a land stewardship ethic which embraces conservation practices designed to ensure that future generations of Americans will have the same abundant forests that we enjoy today.

SFI was developed nationally in 1994 through the American Forest and Paper Association as one of the U.S. forest sector's contributions to the vision of sustainable development established by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Today, this organization is fully independent and governed by a very diverse Board of Directors, with representatives from environmental organizations, forest industry, private landowners, logging professionals, academia, and others. SFI's forestry certification program is internationally recognized and is the

largest single forest standard in the world. In Texas 2.3 million acres are certified under this program; worldwide, 196 million acres are certified and following SFI principles.

SFI community grants provide funds to Habitat for Humanity affiliates, enabling them to build some homes certified to the National Green Building Standards. Green building means incorporating environmental considerations and resource efficiency into home building to minimize environmental impact.

In 2010, SFI invested \$81.4 million in research, important in keeping the best scientific data in the forefront.

SFI certification also extends to the market. An SFI product label lets consumers know they are buying wood or paper from certified forests or certified sourcing – whether it is reams of paper, packaging, two-by-fours, or other lumber products.

SFI® State Implementation Committee

For more information:

- <http://www.texasforestry.org/programs/initiative/>
- <http://www.texasforestry.org/programs/logger-pro/>
- http://www.texasforestry.org/docs/Growing_Your_Assets.pdf

Texas Forestry Association, through its SFI State Implementation Committee, is leading the implementation of SFI in Texas. Other active participants are forest resource companies, Texas Logging Council, Texas Forest Landowners Council, Texas Forest Service, and others in the forestry community.

In 1996, the SFI State Implementation Committee developed the Texas Professional Logger Program to provide continuing education for loggers. The program was created to increase environmental awareness and sustainable forestry practices, and help respond to OSHA safety requirements for loggers. Individual workshops are scheduled throughout the year.

Texas SFI members and cooperators (forest products companies, agencies, consultants, and loggers) encourage

private landowners to participate in SFI by following Best Management Practices to protect their soil and water resources, reforestation following a final harvest, protecting special interest sites, and promoting wildlife on their property. Workshops are sponsored throughout the state to educate landowners on the importance of practicing sustainable forestry. Information packets for landowners are also available.

Texas SFI also has a hand in sponsoring Teachers' Conservation Institute - week-long workshops that use the forest to teach environmental education and principles of forestry.

Texas SFI has sponsored several television and radio commercials, informative displays, as well as highway billboards and newspaper inserts pertaining to Best Management Practices and other SFI principles.

Erosion Control After the Fire

The environmental impacts of a wildfire go far beyond burnt trees. The potential for severe soil erosion and accelerated water runoff also exists after a wildfire due to the lack of vegetation and ground cover to stabilize the soil.

When the protective cover provided by the trees, shrubs, grasses, and ground material that make up a healthy forest is destroyed by wildfire it exposes the land to erosion. With no protection, the impact force of raindrops falling during a heavy storm can detach bare soil and ash particles and wash them down denuded slopes into stream channels; reducing water quality, and altering or degrading aquatic habitat.

In addition, the lack of vegetation reduces the soil's ability to absorb rainwater, making it more likely to run off than soak into the soil. This can reduce groundwater recharge and further increase soil and ash loads delivered to nearby surface water bodies.

Losing nutrient-rich topsoil to erosion diminishes the land's ability to grow trees and hinders the re-establishment of natural vegetation in burned-over areas following a fire. Severe erosion can result in tremendous environmental and economic consequences by filling reservoirs and reducing their water storage capacity, deteriorating water quality and quantity, increasing treatment costs for drinking water, destroying aquatic ecosystems, and reducing biodiversity. Fortunately, there are a number of practical measures landowners can take to mitigate soil erosion caused by wildfire and to prevent sedimentation of surface waters.

The following are some simple precautions you should take immediately following a wildfire to avoid provoking soil erosion and sedimentation on your property.

Plan for erosion control.

Recovery efforts such as land clearing, debris removal, and salvage logging should include plans for controlling erosion and sedimentation. Seek technical assistance from qualified professionals when necessary.

Preserve existing vegetation.

Whether burned or unburned, the roots of vegetation hold the soil together and promote water infiltration. It is especially important to protect green trees and other vegetation adjacent to stream channels and surface waters. However, trees or shrubs that pose an imminent hazard to health and safety should be removed.

Minimize soil disturbance.

When conducting any recovery efforts that involve soil disturbance, such as land clearing or road construction, attempt to minimize the footprint of the disturbance as much as possible. Be especially careful to minimize any disturbances in sensitive areas such as steep slopes, severely burned areas, erodible soils, and areas directly adjacent to wetlands, streams or other water bodies.

Reduce the impact of livestock.

After a wildfire, some areas may need to be deferred until plant growth has re-established and is adequate to support grazing.

Utilize forestry best management practices when salvaging trees.

Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) are conservation practices that help protect your soil and water resources during forestry operations. BMPs include practices like leaving a buffer of trees next to a stream, keeping slash and other debris out of stream channels, minimizing the number of vehicular stream crossings used to access a property, or re-establishing vegetation on temporary roads to prevent erosion.

For more information:

- <http://txforestsservice.tamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=14740>

Did you know...

Six of the ten largest wildfires in recorded Texas history have occurred this season. The largest Texas fire in 2011 consumed 314,444 acres; the largest East Texas fire in history was in Sept. 2011 and burned 40,979 acres.

**Updating Hardin, Jefferson & Orange Co. Forest
Landowners on Forestry and Water Issues**

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*The Texas Forest Service is an
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Through Diversity.*

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Get Help After the Fire

The 2011 wildfire season has been simply devastating for Texas and the people who call this state home. This was one of the worst fire seasons ever. The long recovery and reforestation process can seem arduous and overwhelming, but Texas Forest Service can help.

On the Texas Forest Service homepage (<http://txforestservice.tamu.edu>), click on the GET HELP AFTER THE FIRE box. There, you will find fact sheets on a wide variety of topics of concern after a wildfire. A few of the titles:

- Income Tax Deduction for Casualty Timber Loss
- Income Tax Deduction for Loss of Yard Trees
- Reforestation After a Wildfire
- Tree Planting
- Controlling Brush After a Fire
- Managing Wildlife After the Wildfire
- Agricultural Management Considerations

You can even request assistance with forest recovery from a TFS forester by filling out an online form.



TDD Line: 1-866-419-4872