

# FORESTRY FACTS



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## Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Timber Harvesting

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**Harvesting** includes felling trees and transporting logs or trees on skid trails to a **landing** where products are sorted and loaded onto trucks for transport to a mill.

**Skid trails** are temporary travel-ways for logging equipment to transport felled trees or logs to a landing. They are not intended for over-the-road vehicles.

Skid trails that require excavation need careful design and should follow BMPs in Forestry Fact No. 6, *Forest Roads*.

Landings may be permanent or temporary features. If permanent, they may be used as parking areas or wildlife openings.

In addition to the BMPs detailed in this Forestry Fact, landowners who will be conducting a timber harvest should see the following:

- Forestry Fact No. 3, *Management Planning*.
- When harvesting near streams or lakes, follow BMPs in Forestry Fact No. 5, *Riparian Management Zones (RMZs)*.

- If roads are to be constructed or improved, follow BMPs in Forestry Fact No. 6, *Forest Roads*.
- For BMPs concerning skid trails and landings in wetlands, see Forestry Fact No. 11, *Wetlands*.

### ***BMPs for Harvest Planning***

▲ Limit the length and number of skid trails, and the number of landings and stream crossings to the minimum necessary to conduct the harvest operation and to meet the landowner's objectives.

**Forestry Facts on BMPs are for information only. For details on specific BMPs and their implementation, see the BMP field manual, *Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality*, DNR Pub. FR-093 95. For a copy, ask your DNR forester or call (608) 267-7494.**

### ***BMPs for Harvesting***

- ▲ When possible, winch logs from steep slopes if skidder travel could cause erosion.
- ▲ Avoid operating equipment where excessive soil compaction and rutting may cause erosion that affects water quality.
- ▲ Fill in ruts, apply seed and mulch, and install sediment-control/drainage structures on trails and landings where needed to prevent erosion and sedimentation into surface waters.
- ▲ Inspect soil-stabilization practices during and right after the harvest to insure they are working as intended.
- ▲ Do not pile slash where it may wash into streams, lakes or wetlands.
- ▲ For winter harvesting, mark stream channels and existing culverts before snowfall.

### ***BMPs for Landings***

- ▲ Locate landings outside riparian management zones.
- ▲ Put landings on frozen ground or on firm well-drained soils with a slight slope to promote good drainage. Landings may need a crown shape to allow for drainage.
- ▲ Use existing landings if possible. Close old landings in riparian zones, unless new construction will harm water quality more.
- ▲ Locate residue piles (sawdust, chips, etc.) away from drainages where runoff may wash residue into water bodies or wetlands.

### ***BMPs for Skid Trails***

- ▲ Where possible, keep skid trail grades less than 15%. If steep grades can not be avoided, break the grade, install drainage structures, and use soil stabilization practices to minimize runoff and erosion. Grades greater than 15% should not exceed 300 feet in length.
- ▲ Use existing trails if they provide best long-term access - relocate trails if access and environmental impact can be improved.
- ▲ For skidding across streams, use permanent crossings as described in Forestry Fact No. 6, *Forest Roads*, or use temporary crossings such as pole fords and frozen fords.
  - Pole fords may be used in small streams by placing poles (or small logs) side by side on the streambed. They must be removed right after use to prevent debris from clogging stream.
  - Frozen fords are used in small streams when ice is thick enough, or the streambed is frozen enough, to protect the streambed.

**Reminder: Stream crossing permits are required before installing a crossing on any intermittent or perennial navigable stream.**