

# Planning

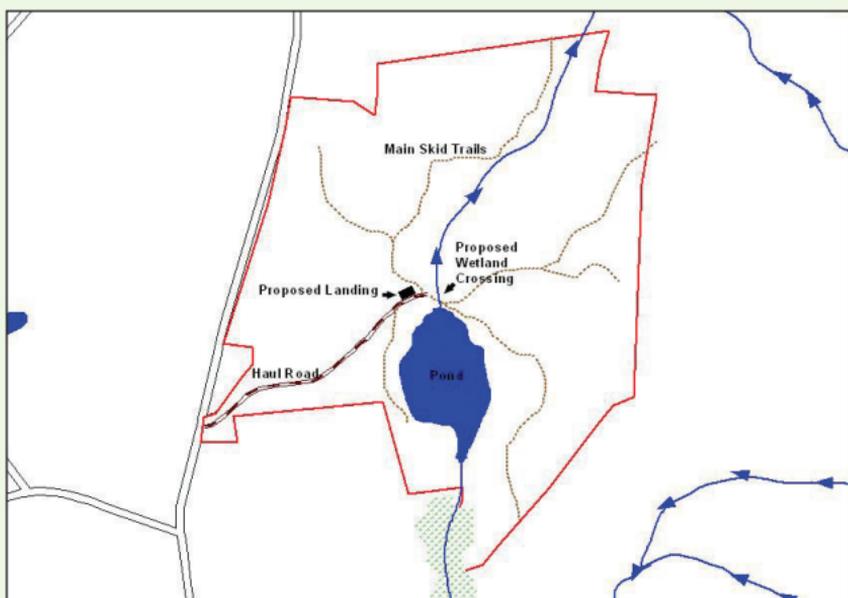
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*Best Management Practices  
for water quality while  
harvesting forest products*

# Planning

AN OPERATIONAL PLAN, OR HARVEST PLAN, SHOULD BE PREPARED BEFORE STARTING EACH TIMBER HARVEST. A GOOD PLAN WILL REDUCE SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION AND INCREASE THE EFFICIENCY OF OPERATIONS AND PROFITABILITY OF THE HARVEST.

Studies have shown that good planning reduces the amount of land used in landings, roads, and trails from 15% or more to 7% or less of the area.



To minimize potential problems, the **operational plan** must consider soils and topography of the area. Planned erosion and sedimentation controls must be both effective and practical. A variety of tools can help in evaluating the site and developing a plan for harvesting activities before entering the site. Useful tools may include: topographic maps, aerial photos, U.S.D.A. soil maps, property maps, tax maps or municipal wetland maps.

Timing can be an important BMP tool. Operating when the ground is dry, frozen, or otherwise stable enough to support the equipment being used are excellent ways to reduce or eliminate erosion and sedimentation. When ground conditions are poor it may be necessary for the operator to plan for the use of low impact equipment or consider temporarily suspending the harvest in some or all areas of the property until conditions improve.

## Planning

Use the following recommendations when planning timber harvest activities:

- Make a tentative list of site-specific BMPs to be incorporated into any forest management plans, operational plans, and timber harvest sales contracts.

- Review landowner's objectives for the site and any existing forest management or operational plan.
- Walk the property to conduct a site evaluation to verify land features and topography against the maps and to facilitate the possible relocation of timber harvest infrastructure and identify the following:
  - √ Property and stand boundaries.
  - √ Public highways, roads, and utility right of ways.



- √ Existing and planned forest access systems (Roads, trails, and landings).
  - √ Equipment maintenance and fueling areas.
  - √ Stream crossings.
  - √ *Filter strips*— areas next to streams, ponds, lakes, **vernal pools**, wetlands and other water bodies where activities may need to be modified to protect water quality, fish and other aquatic resources.
  - √ Sensitive areas containing endangered and threatened species or trees identified as having special benefits to wildlife.
  - √ Poor drainage areas, including springs and seeps.
  - √ Areas of special concern for the landowner, such as cultural sites containing stone walls, historic foundations or walking trails.
  - √ Danger areas or hazards such as open wells
- Examine existing roads, trails, and landings to determine if their location and construction is adequate for continued use. Consider whether relocation would provide better long-term routes.

- Mark roads, trails, landings, and stream crossings on the ground and determine specific control devices to be used. Take advantage of natural features that will make construction easier and drainage most effective. Changing the color of flagging used to mark each operational design feature such as landings, roads, and trails helps clarify instructions provided to logging crews .
- Consider weather and ground conditions when scheduling road building and harvesting operations.
- Avoid wet seasons and plan water crossings (including installation of culverts and bridges) for summer months when water is low and fish eggs aren't incubating.
- On wet sites and when working in or around wetlands, time operations to coincide with stable ground conditions or use low impact equipment.

**Failure to obtain the proper permits or jurisdictional rulings may result in unnecessary delays. See section on [Laws Affecting Forestry Operations](#).**