

PA COUNCIL OF TROUT UNLIMITED
POLICY ON FOREST PRACTICES
MARCH 2007

Pennsylvania Trout recognizes that forested watersheds have a significant influence on our coldwater resources and that timber management practices play a major role in determining the health of our streams and rivers. Failure to employ good management practices, especially during timber harvest, results in many harmful impacts to our streams, rivers and their surrounding lands. These effects include soil loss, erosion and sedimentation, nutrient loss, elevated water temperatures, flooding and channel scouring. Recognizing that forest products are a significant component of the Commonwealth's economy, PA Trout does not oppose timber harvesting, but firmly believes that timber operations must be conducted under best management practices so that the health of our coldwater ecosystems is not impaired.

To ensure the protection of our coldwater resources, Pennsylvania Trout recommends these guidelines:

1. Environmental impacts throughout the entire watershed must be considered when timber harvesting is done, not just at the cutting area and its immediate environs.
2. PA Trout recommends the Commonwealth pursue the authority to require site-specific forest management plans for timber cutting operations, large and small.
3. Regulations to limit timber harvesting within riparian zones should be promulgated. The riparian zone is defined here as the streamside area extending 200 feet beyond the banks. When timber harvesting is done within the riparian area, special requirements must be met. They are:
 - (a) All shrub vegetation must remain undisturbed, and basal diameters must remain at more than 50 percent of the original stand.
 - (b) Entry to the riparian zone must be limited to a few specific locations.
 - (c) Timber harvesting must follow an erosion and sedimentation control plan approved by the County Conservation District, which will also do follow-up inspections.
4. Beyond the riparian zone, slopes making up the harvest area must receive special treatment:
 - (a) Cutting on forested slopes of 10 percent or greater and which comprise 30 percent of the harvest area must follow an approved erosion and sedimentation control plan no matter what the size of the area to be timbered;
 - (b) Cutting on all other harvest sites greater than 50 acres must follow an approved erosion and sedimentation control plan;
 - (c) Any party cutting on all sites greater than 250 acres must obtain an erosion and sedimentation control permit
5. Clear cutting of tracts is not desirable and "no harvest" protected zones should be maintained to help prevent soil erosion.
6. PA Trout strongly encourages all owners of forested lands to register in the Commonwealth Forest Stewardship Program; and, when allowing timber removal, to require the timber harvester to implement an erosion and sedimentation control plan.

7. Professional foresters should be sought to develop all timber harvest plans to protect watersheds and the interests of public or private landowners.
8. Each municipality is encouraged to enact an earth disturbance ordinance and to require permits prior to any logging activity.