



## Fact Sheet 3.7

# Best Management Practices in the South



Best Management Practices (BMPs) are principles that are typically nonregulatory and intended to protect natural resources such as water, wildlife, and soil. BMPs are usually dynamic guidelines that recommend methods for forestry, agriculture, petroleum drilling, road building, and other land-use practices to reduce environmental damage. All states in the southern United States have BMPs of some kind, and some states are considering making them regulatory. Some states penalize forestry practices that contribute to water pollution with warnings, fines, sanctions, license probation or revocation, public reprimand, and operation shutdowns (Virginia DOF 2002). In many states violators are reported to state environmental protection agencies for enforcement action.

The BMPs of many southern states share common characteristics. Sediment is the nonpoint source water pollutant of greatest concern in southern forest management. All 13 southern states have adopted silviculture BMPs and work to educate loggers, forestry practitioners, and landowners (Wear and Greis 2002). All southern states except Kentucky and North Carolina have nonregulatory BMP programs. Kentucky instituted a regulatory timber harvesting program in 2000, and North Carolina has a set of mandatory forest management standards (Wear and Greis 2002). One 1993 study compared a regulatory to a nonregulatory program and found that they provided similar effectiveness in water quality protection, but the regulatory program was more costly for landowners (Hawks et al. 1993).



Photo by: Ginni Swanton

Many BMPs in the South aim to protect water quality.

BMPs tend to be more effectively implemented if there is professional assistance available. Thus, nonregulatory programs require constant educational efforts aimed at the ever-changing audiences who own and manage southern forests. Natural resource professionals can provide landowners with appropriate information and guidance about BMPs. Resource professionals can also advise policy makers about current BMPs and their effectiveness, and help develop new BMPs.

### Suggested Reading

*The Southern Forest Resource Assessment* (<http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/sustain/report/index.htm>) by David N. Wear and John G. Greis, 2002. Asheville, North Carolina: USDA, Forest Service, Southern Research Station.

## References

Hawks, L. J.; F. W. Cabbage; H. L. Haney Jr.; Shaffer, R. M.; and Newman, D. H. 1993. "Forest Water Quality Protection: A Comparison of Regulatory and Voluntary Programs." *Journal of Forestry* 91(5): 48-54.

Wear, D. N. and J. G. Greis, eds. 2002. *The Southern Forest Resource Assessment*. Asheville NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station, <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/sustain/report/aqua4/aqua4-10.htm>. (accessed August 10, 2005).

Virginia DOF. 2002. *Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality*, 4th edition. Charlottesville VA: Virginia Department of Forestry, <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/wq/index-bmp-guide.shtml>. (accessed August 10, 2005).