

Skid trails can become an erosion and water quality pollution problem if not planned, managed, and stabilized properly. The North Carolina Forest Practices Guidelines Related to Water Quality (FPGs) prescribe standards that must be achieved for the protection of water quality during forestry operations.

One way to help comply with the FPGs is by using appropriate Best Management Practices, or BMPs. This video will outline some basic BMP concepts that you may find useful on your skid trails.

Above all else, controlling runoff on skid trails and roads comes down to 2 basic goals:
>>> Slow It Down & Spread It Out <<<

Preharvest Planning

Identify where main skid trails should be placed on the tract, or *at least* where they *should not* be placed. Keep skid trails away from:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Stream crossings✗ Streamside Management Zones (SMZ)✗ Steep slopes or very erodible soils | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Persistent wet areas✗ Rock outcrops✗ Utility corridors |
|--|--|

Remember: The best skid trail for water quality protection may not always be a straight line. You may be better off going around a sensitive spot to avoid creating a water quality problem.

Questions to Consider:

- 1 - What are some benefits of doing preharvest planning?
- 2 - Who can help you with preharvest planning?
- 3 - Why wouldn't you always set your skid trail as a straight line from the woods to the deck?

Basic BMP Concepts

- Minimize overall soil disturbance; this can be accomplished by many ways:
 - ✓ Keep the number and size of skid trails to a minimum.
 - ✓ Avoid intensive & widespread rutting, souping, churning, or compacting.
 - ✓ Minimize gouging of the soil from the dragged logs or trees; these gouges can funnel runoff if left unchecked.
 - ✓ Pack down leftover logging debris atop the running surface of the main skid trails. This debris acts like a cushion on the soil and reduces the impact of falling raindrops.

- Keep away from the SMZ, or use extra precautions to make sure sediment is kept out of the stream if a skid trail is needed within or close by the SMZ.
 - ✓ If a skid trail crossing is needed, consider using bridgemats.
- Establish a break-in-the-grade of the skid trail; this simply means to avoid long continuous stretches of skid trails when you are working on sloping land.

Remember the 2 goals for controlling runoff: >>> Slow It Down & Spread It Out <<<

Questions to Consider:

4 - What are some ways you can minimize soil disturbance on your skid trails?

5 - Why are SMZ's and stream crossings a sensitive area for skid trails?

6 - What are the 2 main goals for controlling runoff?

Stabilization & Close-Out

- Rehabilitate and stabilize skid trails as soon as possible once they are no longer needed - - minimize the amount of time the soil lays bare.
 - ✓ Seed & mulch critical areas to establish groundcover
 - ✓ Erosion blankets can work well on steep slopes or sensitive areas like stream crossings
 - ✓ Packed down leftover logging debris may stabilize the soil, but don't count on it for all your needs.
- Construct water diversions, such as waterbars, to slow down & spread out the runoff. While watching the bulldozer construct a waterbar, keep in mind the features of an effective waterbar:
 - ✓ Start from the up-hill side, and work your way down
 - ✓ Diagonally angled across the skid trail
 - ✓ Excavated trench across the up-hill face
 - ✓ Mounded hump of soil packed down
 - ✓ Upslope end of the soil hump is 'tied-in' with the side / cut slope
 - ✓ Stabilized outlet for the runoff to soak into the soil

Questions to Consider:

7 - Why should a skid trail be stabilized and closed-out soon after it is no longer needed?

8 - What are some methods of stabilizing a skid trail?

9 - What are some features of an effective waterbar?