



# Forest Facts

## STREAMSIDE PROTECTION

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The riparian (streamside) protection rules enacted in 1994 under the Forest Practices Act were the most comprehensive ever passed in Oregon. They were created after three years of considering science and policies that pertained to water protection and classification, beginning with the 1991 legislative session and Senate Bill 1125. The bill instructed the Board of Forestry and the Oregon Department of Forestry to revise stream protection rules so that fish in all Oregon streams would be equally protected.

All private, state and local government forest landowners or operators conducting operations near streams, lakes, or wetlands must comply with the rules. The Senate Bill established a clear target for water quality by developing best management practices.

### **Rules allow flexibility in addressing needs**

These rules allow for flexibility in the way they are implemented to ensure that appropriate management practices are being used in the best ways possible to protect riparian areas on forestlands and improve stream habitat. This flexibility also provides incentive for landowners to address restoration needs.

### **Four critical areas are addressed**

1. Maintaining live trees and vegetation along streams and other waters. This enhances biodiversity and improves fish habitat by providing cover, shade, sediment reduction, adequate stream temperature levels, snags and downed wood, nutrients, and bank protection.
2. Increasing large, mature wood along streams that, over time, will fall into streams and enhance fish habitat.
3. Maintaining adequate fish passage up and down the length of a stream. Ensuring that fish have opportunities to move along the length of streams is important for spawning, feeding and avoiding reaches of streams with high temperatures or low flows.
4. Stream and landscape variation. The riparian rules created nine different stream classifications and additional lake and wetland classifications, providing the most appropriate protection to a variety of streams and waters.

## Key rule components

- All fish bearing streams have riparian management areas between 50 and 100 feet, which includes retaining vegetation and conifer trees. Within these areas, all fish bearing or streams used for domestic water, as well as all other medium and large streams, will require a 20-foot no-harvest buffer on each side of the stream. An exception to the rule, however, is when it is necessary to restore a stand of trees.
- The revised stream classification system now contains nine classes, rather than just two under former rules. The system identifies seven geographic regions, distinguishes between streams with fish or used for domestic use, and whether the stream is large, medium or small, based on water volume.
- Rules related to harvest practices, road construction, stream crossings and fish passage have been strengthened considerably.
- There are now incentives for landowners to purposely place large woody debris in streams to enhance habitat, where appropriate.
- The volume of conifer trees retained along fish-bearing streams has substantially increased over those retained under previous rules. This helps ensure there are future opportunities for conifer trees to fall naturally into streams, and that stream structure and fish habitat continue to improve. The rules also allow for an increase

in trees that are retained to provide shade, which helps maintain stream temperatures for aquatic life.

- A commitment from the Department of Forestry (with the help of the Department of Fish and Wildlife) to perform comprehensive fish use surveys of forest streams to help identify how they can best be protected.
- The Board of Forestry can adopt special protection rules for streams that aren't in compliance with state water quality standards or streams with threatened and endangered species. A monitoring program examines how the rules are working and provides opportunities to follow-up on potential problem areas and progress.

## Guidance provided in implementing the rules

The rules were implemented in late spring and early summer of 1994. Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) personnel, cooperators, landowners and operators received extensive instruction about the rules and training materials. Videos and workbooks were produced for classroom or home use. These materials can be obtained by contacting Associated Oregon Loggers or any ODF field office.