



FOREST CONSULTANT'S NEWSLETTER

JULY 2002

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Department of Conservation, Maine Forest Service Stewardship Program

LOGGER SKIDDER BRIDGE ASSISTANCE OFFERED

The Maine Forest Service recently introduced a new project providing technical and financial assistance to loggers in obtaining temporary, portable skidder bridges. Skidder bridges used as temporary stream crossing structures may offer both operational and water quality benefits on harvest operations. The program is intended to encourage and expand the use of skidder bridges by loggers.

To provide an initial focus, the project will target timber harvesting in the 8 watersheds where Atlantic Salmon have been declared endangered. These include the Sheepscot & Ducktrap rivers, and Cove Brook in Winterport. Five further rivers downeast, the Pleasant, Narraguagus, Machias, East Machias, and Dennys, also hold endangered salmon.

Loggers whose primary business is timber harvesting may apply to MFS for cost-share assistance to build or buy a new skidder bridge. Landowners, foresters, and other non-loggers are not directly eligible. Bridges must meet minimum specs. Funds are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Financial assistance is made possible through a grant from the USDA Forest Service.

The first use of each bridge must be within one of the above salmon watersheds. Loggers who apply must agree to allow field inspection of the installed bridges, and must meet other conditions as well.

MFS recently hosted two workshops on the use of temporary skidder bridges in Union and Whitneyville. Applicants must have attended these workshops, or commit to attending similar workshops planned for later this year. Professional Logging Contractors of Maine and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts are providing additional assistance with the workshops.

For more information, please call Morten Moesswilde at Maine Forest Service at 207-287-2791 or in-state at 1-800-367-0223.

SOMETIMES WE ALL NEED A LITTLE REMINDER...

I'm getting quite a few questions on what paperwork is needed to complete payments to landowners under the Forest Stewardship Assistance Program. So here's some things you need to do:

- ◆ Make sure that the landowner has either a copy of the payment check or a notarized statement that the bill is paid. Either the consultant or the landowner can swear that.
- ◆ Include a signed copy of the pledge with the plan. There are 2 pledges: The landowner signs one when he applies and the other is a page in the plan. Pledge wording for the plan is - "This plan reflects my objectives as the landowner. I accept and approve the recommendations made by the resource professional. I pledge that any management practices implemented on my land will be consistent with these recommendations and it is my intention to follow them wherever possible."
- ◆ Supply the landowner with the forester certification form, completed and signed by you.
- ◆ Be sure the landowner knows where to send the paperwork (to the MFS District Forester) or help them do it.

AND ANOTHER REMINDER...

ALL (and I do mean ALL) paperwork for practices cost-shared under ice storm funds **MUST** be to the appropriate MFS District Forester by no later than Friday, September 6, 2002. This includes Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) and TSI program practices.

If we don't have the paperwork, the landowner will **NOT GET PAID**. No exceptions. This funding dries up on September 30, 2002, and we need to have time to process the payments prior to September 20 to get into the federal fiscal year. If you have any questions, give the Maine Forest Service a call.

LEGISLATURE MAKES A LOT OF CHANGES

As you may know, the 120th Maine Legislature enacted legislation in April 2002 that affects forest landowners with land enrolled in the Maine Tree Growth Tax Program. This law goes into effect July 25, 2002. The new law makes changes in both the Maine Tree Growth Tax Law and the Forest Practices Act, and applies to all landowners with land enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Program.

The Maine Tree Growth Tax Law

Previously, a landowner who purchased land already enrolled in Tree Growth had to have a new management plan drawn up within a year of purchasing the land. The new requirements are:

1. **Before harvesting** on land enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Program, a new landowner has one year to either: (A) Submit a sworn statement to the town (or to the State Tax Assessor in the case of the unorganized territories) that a new forest management and harvest plan has been prepared; or, (B) Submit a statement from a Licensed Forester that the land is being managed according to the previous landowner's plan.
2. The tax assessor can request, and the landowner must supply, a copy of the forest management and harvest plan. This clarifies a requirement of the current law. Please note, your plan is not a public document and is not available to the general public for examination.
3. The tax assessor may ask the Maine Forest Service to evaluate a forest management and harvest plan to determine if it meets the specifications of the Maine Tree Growth Tax Law, and to determine whether a harvest (or other silvicultural activity) conducted on the land complies with the forest management and harvest plan.

The Forest Practices Act

The Forest Operations Notification form required for all timber harvesting will be changed to reflect changes in the law. These changes are:

1. A check box to indicate whether the land being harvested is enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Program; and,

2. A statement signed by the landowner that the harvest is consistent with the forest management & harvest plan for the property.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in removal of the land from the Tree Growth Tax Program by the local taxing authority and the levying of a substantial penalty. Also, if the landowner indicates on the Forest Operations Notification form that the harvest will result in a change of land use, this is considered a withdrawal from the Tree Growth Tax Program. The Maine Forest Service will notify the tax assessor that the land (or portion thereof) no longer meets the requirements of the Maine Tree Growth Tax Law.

After July 25 all harvest notifications must be on the new notification form or on the old notification form with an addendum to be supplied by the Maine Forest Service. Any harvesting begun prior to acceptance of a complete notification will not be in compliance with state law. Please contact us to request a copy of the addendum. Or, you may download a copy of the addendum from our website:

<http://www.maineforestservice.org>

If you have any questions about these changes to the Maine Tree Growth Tax Law and the Forest Practices Act and how they may affect you, please contact Kathy Nitschke at the Maine Forest Service at (207) 287-1073 or 1-800-367-0223 (in-state only).

Subdivision Rules in Organized Towns

The Legislature followed up on its closure of the "40-acre loophole" in LURC's subdivision rules by doing the same for the organized towns. The key change requires lots of 40 or more acres to be counted for the purposes of determining if a subdivision has been created, unless the municipality has, by ordinance or regulation, elected not to count such lots.

For more information, see LD 2119 (Public Law Chapter 651), An Act Relating to Subdivision Review and Title Search Procedures, on the Revisor of Statutes web page:

<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/ros/meconlaw.htm>



USEFUL WEB SITES

The Maine Board of Pesticides control has an informative web site on the use of herbicides on forest lands.

http://www.state.me.us/agriculture/pesticides/forest_herbicides_faq.htm

This plant database serves as a single source of standardized information about plants including color illustrations and maps. Information on endangered species and wetland indicator status is given, plus information on erosion control, ecology, and more. You can search by common or scientific name.

<http://plants.usda.gov/>

THE LAMMERT REPORT

The wettest “drought” I’ve ever seen

Environmentally conscious loggers have had some tough weeks so far this year as the “sprinkles and showers” have kept them off their roads and out of the woods. I bumped into one logger who was busy using the run off in the woods to plan where the next roads should go to disturb as few natural water courses as possible.

Somewhere along the way he had acquired a John Deere “70” tracked excavator, and he was busy using Larry Moffit’s (of the old St. Regis/Champion era) method of road building. Larry watched for years as loggers cleared as much as 100’ for a right of way through the woods for a main haul road. The rocks and boulders in the cleared right of way were pushed to the outside and load after load of gravel was dumped down the middle to make the road.

Larry got the idea to pull all the rocks into the middle of a much narrower (50’ or less) cleared right of way and dump the gravel on top of the collection of rocks. In some places the road bed was 5’ above what became the ditches on both sides but those roads never heaved or washed out.

So my friend with his ‘70’ excavator is building roads for his next year’s logging operation (he was able to get a multi-year contract as he could not harvest during “nesting season” on that woodlot) and by the time next year arrived, grass was already in place as the road had had a year to settle. He was lucky in this respect.

-- Pete L.

“You can observe a lot just by watchin’.”

-- Yogi Berra

GIVING FOREST MANAGERS MORE CONTROL OVER ASPEN

Even before researchers published studies about what time of year and how high to cut aspen to minimize (or maximize) regrowth, these results were being implemented on the ground by forest managers in central Ontario.

These recommendations include cutting in the fall at 10” above ground to ensure maximum regrowth and cutting in mid-summer at 20”-30” above ground to reduce aspen regeneration. Traditionally, brushsaw cutting was done in the fall at ground level because the workforce was available and it’s much easier to see where the stems are after the leaves are gone. However, this practice was not effective for crop tree release.

Especially in central Ontario where forest management areas are smaller, more intensive management is feasible. Thus, alternatives that wouldn’t be considered cost effective or practical in other areas are possible here. Jeff Leavey, general manager of the Ottawa Valley Sustainable Forest License in central Ontario stated that this method was more practical and effective and more cost effective than the brushsaw with herbicide applications used previously.

As with all alternatives, there is a downside. Some wildlife biologists are concerned that this cutting method is too effective - and may be reducing moose and deer browse in some areas. In addition, leaving such high stumps can present hazards to forestry workers. To address wildlife concerns, forest managers are limiting treatment areas and ensuring sufficient habitat exists nearby. Safety concerns are being addressed by planning cutting operations carefully, so workers don’t have to travel back across treated areas.

-- Lisa J. Buse, Ontario Forest
Research Institute

Research published on this topic can be found in the Northern Journal of Applied Forestry 16(2): 108-114. *Response of immature trembling aspen to season and height of cut*. For reprints, contact the Ontario Forest Research Institute publication request line: (705) 946-2981 ext. 271 or e-mail: information.ofri@mnr.gov.on.ca.

STEP RIGHT UP --- PROJECT CANOPY OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Maine cities and towns invited to new community forestry initiative

The Maine Forest Service invites all Maine towns and cities to join its new Project Canopy initiative. Project Canopy is a cooperative effort of the Maine Forest Service and the Pine Tree State Arboretum. It helps Maine communities maximize the benefits trees and forests provide. Launched in October 2001, the program has been working with two model towns, Biddeford and Corinna, to develop fact sheets, instructional materials and an informative website - now available to municipalities statewide.

Now that the two model towns have been selected it is time to put out the welcome mat to any town that would like some extra help getting their tree programs off the ground. We can help towns that already have a plan, and lend a hand to those that don't. Project Canopy doesn't impose, it complements what a community would like to do.

Communities joining Project Canopy will receive free technical and educational assistance from the Maine Forest Service and, possibly, financial help through its grant program. Project Canopy's role is flexible, and each town will receive individualized help, tailored to fit its needs.

There's no such thing as a one-size-fits-all community forestry program. Its mission is to provide leadership and technical services to help support the stewardship of Maine's community forests. In simplest terms, Project Canopy helps Maine communities make better use of their trees and avoid costly, long-term mistakes. Ultimately, these avoided costs can be more beneficial to a community and its yearly budget than any other service we provide.

The Maine Forest Service looks for three distinct characteristics that help ensure a successful community forestry program: strong support from municipal officials, a solid corps of motivated volunteers, and commitment to a long-term community forestry plan.

Interested municipal officials and citizen volunteers should call the Maine Forest Service toll-free at 1-800-367-0223, and ask for Project Canopy. More information about Project Canopy is available on the web, at <http://www.projectcanopy.org>.

ADDITIONAL PINE SHOOT BEETLES DETECTED

APHIS Proposing Franklin County Be Declared Infested and Regulated

After initial discovery of the Pine Shoot Beetle (PSB) in 2000 in Adamstown, the Maine Department of Agriculture and the Maine Forest Service established a state PSB quarantine on northern Oxford County (north of the Appalachian Trail). This action regulates the movement of pine materials from the infested area, limiting artificial spread within the state and restricting the area of Maine exposed to potentially infested materials from outside the state. At that time the USDA APHIS established "interim regulations" on *all* of Oxford County and asked for comment from the effected stakeholders. Although the comment period for this proposal ended last August, the rule has not yet been finalized.

In the intervening period PSB has been recovered from Rangeley, Kingfield, and Carrabassett Valley in Franklin County (but to date, no beetles have been recovered from elsewhere in Oxford County). Earlier this month the MFS received notification that APHIS has proposed to enlarge the area of Maine regulated for PSB to also include all of Franklin County. APHIS is again asking for comments from stakeholders. **All comments must be received by APHIS on or before August 19, 2002.**

The specific proposal can be seen @ <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html> (Scroll down to: June 18 Docket #: 02-017-1). Concerned parties should submit comments by postal mail/commercial delivery or by e-mail. If you use postal mail/commercial delivery, please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 02-017-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 02-017-1. If you use e-mail, address your comment to regulations@aphis.usda.gov. Your comment must be contained in the body of your message; do not send attached files. Include your name and address in your message and "Docket No. 02-017-1" on the subject line.

