

Release

from the South Carolina Forestry Commission



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SC Forestry Commission protects water quality statewide by offering BMP courtesy exams

The South Carolina Forestry Commission is charged with overseeing Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) across the state, among many other responsibilities. Forestry BMPs are a set of guidelines designed primarily to protect water quality while forest operations such as logging, road construction and site preparation are being performed.

One of the agency's most effective tools for monitoring compliance with these guidelines is conducting BMP courtesy exams, which consist of a series of checklists, measurements and observations designed to assess the impact of forest operations on water quality. Offered to timber harvesters and other contractors who perform forestry activities, the exams are free and intended both to educate the contractors and prevent possible BMP violations.

Although the state's BMPs are non-regulatory, voluntary practices, they are designed to help landowners, loggers and forestry professionals prevent violations of the Clean Water Act, the South Carolina Pollution Control Act and other laws and regulations applicable to forestry. **In fact, Forestry Commission data show that water quality is protected on 98.6 percent of timber harvesting operations for which a BMP courtesy exam was conducted.**

South Carolina's BMPs for Forestry have been endorsed by and received national recognition from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has also cited South Carolina's BMP program as a national model.

Please allow us to assist you with any pre-harvest planning or offer advice on regulatory issues. To request a courtesy exam or to ask questions about the BMP program, please contact Herb Nicholson at (803) 896-8593.

By the numbers

In the past year, BMP foresters have been very busy. They have made more than 1,400 site visits to nearly 650 different sites and provided 287 courtesy exams to loggers throughout the state. In addition, BMP foresters have provided nearly 75 hours of BMP instruction to more than 930 foresters, loggers and landowners.

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The mission of the South Carolina Forestry Commission is to protect, promote, enhance and nurture the forest lands of South Carolina in a manner consistent with achieving the greatest good for its citizens.