

EPA: No Further Regulation of Forest Roads Necessary

Science-Based Best Management Practices Programs Offer Effective Water Quality Protections

WASHINGTON (June 27, 2016)—The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today issued its decision that no additional regulations are needed to address stormwater discharges from forest roads under the Clean Water Act (CWA). This determination recognizes the success and continual improvement of state best management practices programs, which are proven to be effective in protecting water quality.

EPA was under a court order to respond to the remand in *Environmental Defense Center, Inc. v. EPA* (EDC v. EPA, 2003) to address whether the Act's section 402(p)(6) requires additional regulation. EPA concluded that efforts to help strengthen existing programs addressing forest road discharges would be more effective than superimposing additional federal regulations.

State forestry best management practices (BMPs) are effective measures implemented during silvicultural operations on private lands to protect water quality. In its decision, EPA recognized that programs already exist nationwide to protect against water quality problems caused by discharges from forest roads. Monitoring shows that implementation rates average 91 percent nationwide and have been shown to be effective in protecting water quality when properly implemented. These programs employ a variety of approaches that are tailored to address regional and local differences.

“State forestry agencies applaud the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) decision not to pursue additional regulations for stormwater discharges from forest roads. State Foresters agree with the decision that additional federal regulation is not necessary, would be duplicative of existing programs, and could divert resources away from currently successful on-the-ground stream protection efforts. Additional federal regulation would in fact discourage forest management, protection, and retention activities that enhance environmental quality,” **said Jay Farrell, executive director of the National Association of State Foresters (NASF)**. NASF is a non-profit organization that represents the directors of the state forestry agencies.

“Forest owners are pleased EPA exercised its broad discretion under the Clean Water Act by keeping management of water quality programs at the local level through state Best Management Practices (BMPs),” **said Dave Tenny, National Alliance of Forest Owners President and CEO**. “BMPs are a proven tool for protecting the quality of our nation’s rivers and streams while taking into account the diversity of forest landscapes.”

“EPA’s decision confirms the added value of voluntary certification standards like the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, coupled with state forestry programs and federal laws, to ensure responsible forest operations and environmental protections,” **said Kathy Abusow, President and CEO of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc.** “The SFI Program has long been a leader in the protection and enhancement of water quality, both through its standard requirements and the training of harvesting professionals. Today’s decision demonstrates that EPA can rely on this robust framework to achieve water quality goals.”

EPA anticipates the final notice will be published in the Federal Register in July 2016. Check back on the Forest Roads web page for the final notice at <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/forest-roads>.

To learn more about best management practices, view the NASF interactive water quality map detailing practices in each state at <http://www.stateforesters.org/action-issues-and-policy/state-forestry-BMPs-map>.

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About the National Association of State Foresters (NASF)

NASF represents State and Territorial Forester interests by influencing forest policy and leading efforts to optimize social, economic, and environmental benefits of trees and forests.

About the National Alliance of Forest Owners

NAFO is an organization of private forest owners committed to advancing national policies that promote the economic and environmental benefits of privately-owned forests. NAFO membership encompasses more than 80 million acres of private forestland in 47 states. Working forests in the U.S. support 2.4 million jobs.

About the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Inc. (SFI)

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Inc. (SFI) stands for future forests. An independent nonprofit organization, SFI promotes sustainable forestry with comprehensive programs supporting ecosystem research and conservation, education and professional accreditation, community engagement, and an internationally-recognized forest certification program. Since 1995, SFI program participants have invested more than \$1.5 billion in sustainable forestry research and more than 280 million acres/113 million hectares in the US and Canada have been certified to the SFI Forest Management Standard. In addition, SFI promotes sustainable forestry by offering the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard and the SFI Chain-of-Custody Standard to address the diversity of the forest products supply chain. SFI on-product labels help consumers support future forests through responsible purchasing decisions. SFI Inc. is governed by a three-chamber board of directors with equally balanced representation from the environmental, social, and economic sectors. Learn more at sfiprogram.org.

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