

10. Forestry and Silviculture Management

Agricultural Practices (A)	Development (D)	On-site Wastewater Systems (O)	Stormwater Runoff (SR)	Wastewater Treatment (WW)			
Drinking Water (DW)	Tourism and Other Economic Development (T)	Water Quality Standards (WQS)					
Water Quality (WQ)	Exotic species (ES)	Fertilizers and Pesticides (F)	Heavy metals (H)	Phosphorus and Nutrient Loading (N)	Organic compounds (OC)	Pathogens (P)	Sediment (S)
Comprehensive Planning (C)	Education (E)	Economic Revitalization & Sustainability (ER)	Infrastructure (I)				

Introduction

Forestry and timber harvesting is an important industry in the Cayuga Watershed, with an annual removal of over six million board feet. Survey records from the late 18th century indicate that more than 97% of the 785 square mile Cayuga Watershed was forested prior to European settlement. By late in the 20th century, only about a third of the watershed was forested.

The Nature of the Problem

Undisturbed forests are highly conservative ecosystems, with minimal loss of sediments and nutrients to downstream waters. Forestry activities have the potential to greatly increase erosion and sedimentation. Because sediment is the pollutant of highest priority in the Cayuga watershed, it is important that both commercial interests and individuals manage forestry practices to minimize sediment loss.

Goals

- Minimize erosion from forestry/timber harvesting operations;
- Prevent sediment originating from forestry practices from reaching water bodies;
- Avoid altering physical characteristics of the stream from improperly constructed stream crossings and/or felling practices;
- Keep streamside vegetation intact to avoid thermal modification.

Existing Measures

NYSDEC has developed programs for both private and commercial woodland managers to manage the resource and protect environmental quality. The focus of the programs is education and voluntary compliance with incentives.

Recommendation

The existing regulatory programs and associated outreach materials are very well suited for application to the Cayuga Watershed. The IO and its associated Committees, Watershed Steward, and the CLWN should include information regarding these resources in their public outreach materials. They include the following:

Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Landowners, resource managers, and timber harvesters are responsible for evaluating specific harvest sites and selecting management practices that will protect water quality. A Forest Management Plan that accounts for specific site conditions should be developed before any harvesting operation. This is a voluntary plan designed to protect the health and future regeneration of the forest, and nearby aquatic resources. Proper site-specific planning for the use of BMPs before forestry operations are begun can prevent or minimize soil erosion and sedimentation of waters from improperly designed and constructed logging roads, skid trails, log landings, and stream crossings. For more

information and specific recommendations see Timber Harvesting Guidelines: What are they? ><http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/df/privland/privassist/bmp.html>> and Got trees? Call before you cut <http://www.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/forestrypage/call_before_you_cut/online_brochure.htm>

Financial Assistance

The Environmental Quality Improvement Program(EQIP) (see Appendix H - Agricultural Programs) is a USDA-NRCS initiative authorized by the 1996 Farm Bill that has several programs for forest improvement. Also see Agricultural Practices section of this report.

The Stewardship Incentive Program (for more information see <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/df/privland/forprot/icestorm/iceinfor.html>) (SIP) is a federal cost share program to encourage landowners of small to medium-sized tracts (between 5 and 1,000 acres) of forest or other land suitable for stewardship management to use holistic forest management. Landowners must first have a NYSDEC-approved stewardship management plan that has been developed by a forester to be eligible. In addition, owners can apply for deferment of local tax payments.

Forest landowners owning 50 acres or more and who commit to and implement a long-term forest management plan developed by a forester, are eligible for tax relief under Section 480-a of the New York State Real Property Tax Law (RPTL 480-a). This program provides up to an 80% reduction in property taxes in exchange for a rolling ten-year commitment to a NYSDEC-approved forest management plan. For more information see Taxation of forest lands <<http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/regs/199.htm>>.

Technical Assistance

The NYS Cooperative Forest Management Program (for more information see <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/df/privland/privassist/help.html>) is a forest program administered by the NYSDEC to encourage the private forest landowners in New York to apply sound forest management practices to their woodlands.

The New York State Cooperating Timber Harvester Program (CTH) (for more information see <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/df/smallbusiness.html#programs>) is sponsored by the NYSDEC and is designed to improve relations between landowners and timber harvesters in New York State, and to help protect our forest, land and water resources by promoting the use of the Timber Harvesting Guidelines for New York and Forest Practice Standards.

NYSDEC provides a directory of Cooperating Consultant Foresters (for more information see <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/df/privland/privassist/consulting.pdf>) who have agreed to follow established management standards. Private landowners are encouraged to hire consultants from this list. For more information see NYSDEC Cooperating Forester Program (for more information see <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/df/privland/privassist/coopprogram.html>).