

Working Forests Support Jobs, Water Quality, and Conservation

Private forests support jobs, open space, clean air and water, and other benefits

- Private U.S. forests support 2.5 million U.S. jobs and \$87 billion in paychecks.
- 10 million private forest owners manage 427 million acres – 57% of the forested land in the U.S.
- These working forests are vital to our nation’s natural resource infrastructure, providing forest products, open space, wildlife habitat, clean air and water, recreation, and more.

Existing state and federal regulations protect water quality

- The U.S. is the world leader in sustainable forestry. Individual states administer the world’s most effective framework of forestry laws, regulations, and agreements in a way that is carefully tailored to local conditions and needs.
- State administered best management practices (BMPs) under the Clean Water Act protect water quality during forestry operations, including harvesting, regeneration, and road use.
- Ongoing studies demonstrate that BMPs are highly effective at protecting water quality^[1].
- Since 1976, the EPA has regulated forest management, including roads, as nonpoint sources of water pollution because they recognize that state administered BMPs protect water quality.

Requiring National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for forestry activities threatens U.S. forests and U.S. jobs

- The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit recently overturned 35 years of precedent by ruling that forest roads and associated stormwater ditches are point sources subject to the same kinds of permits required for factories, landfills, industrial parking lots and other confined sources of water pollution.
- New permit requirements, such as application, monitoring, reporting, and paperwork will create significant costs and delays as well as new legal risks from citizen suits for hundreds of thousands of forest owners without additional environmental benefit.
- Forest owners depend on an economic return from their forests to afford sound, long-term forest management. Unnecessary new regulatory costs reduce economic returns and investments in the land and ultimately force private forests into non-forest uses.
- The cost of unnecessary permits would also make U.S. mills less profitable at a time of severe economic hardship and intense international competition. This could displace U.S. manufacturing with manufacturing in more polluting countries jeopardizing both the environment and U.S. jobs.

^[1]Schilling, Dr. Erik. *Compendium of Forestry Best Management Practices for Controlling Nonpoint Source Pollution in North America*. Technical Bulletin Number 966. National Council for Air and Stream Improvement. September 2009.