

1. STREAMSIDE MANAGEMENT ZONES

A **streamside management zone (SMZ)** is a strip of land immediately adjacent to a water of the state where soils, organic matter and vegetation are managed to protect the physical, chemical and biological integrity of surface water adjacent to and downstream from forestry operations. Table 1 provides guidelines for protecting the critical area within a SMZ.

Harvesting in streamside management zones should be done so as to protect the forest floor and under story vegetation from damage. Do not remove (harvest) trees from banks, beds, or steep slopes if it will destabilize the soil and cause degradation of the water. Trees on the south and west banks provide the most critical shading of



Landowners should have adequate streamside management zones marked before negotiating bids for timber sales.

water. Fell and skid trees directly away from waters of the state. According to Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) regulations, any tops or other logging debris dropped into the water or channel must be removed; **however, organic debris in the water prior to harvest should not be removed from the stream.**

Stabilize wheel ruts if they could carry sediment into waters of the state. Locate log decks and roads outside of SMZs (except at proper stream crossings and access points or unless steep topography/wetland conditions necessitate location within the SMZ).



Table 1: SMZ Minimum Standards¹

Purpose:	Protect banks, bed, and floodplains from erosion; control direct deposition of pollutants; provide shade, food, and cover for aquatic ecosystems; filter out pollutants from uplands.	
Management	Perennial Stream	Intermittent Stream
Minimum width on each side of channel	In no cases should SMZs be less than 35 feet from a definable bank. ² A landowner's personal management objectives, on-site condition or stream sensitivity may require wider SMZs and more stringent control of forestry operations within the SMZ. For example, width should be extended to account for erodibility of soil, steepness of slopes and activities to be performed outside of the SMZ. ³ SMZs must always be wide enough to maintain water quality standards.	
Delineation	Outside boundaries should be well marked before operations begin.	
Roads	Follow state and federal BMPs (see Sections 2, 3, and 6) for roads and stream crossings.	
Harvesting Method	Partial cut only within minimum of 35 feet; partial cut or regeneration cut can take place beyond 35 feet.	Partial cut or regeneration cut when water quality degradation can be avoided.
Minimum Residual Cover	50% Crown cover	Vegetative ⁴
Reforestation	Natural regeneration, hand planting, direct seeding.	
Mechanical Site Preparation	No	
Herbicide	If herbicide is used, adhere strictly to label restrictions. Direct application is preferred over broadcast spraying.	
Fertilizer	No	

¹In cases where the stream channel is significantly braided, the forest should be managed under wetland BMP management recommendations (Section 6).

²If wildlife is a major objective, a minimum SMZ of 50 feet is recommended.

³USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service can provide information on soil erodibility.

⁴Permanent residual tree cover is not required along intermittent streams as long as other vegetation and organic debris are left to protect the forest floor during regeneration.