

Project Planning: Locating Roads, Landings, Skid Trails, and Crossings

Forest Management Practices Fact Sheet Managing Water Series #1

Best Management Practices (BMPs) can prevent or minimize the impact of forestry activities on rivers, lakes, streams, groundwater, wetlands, and visual quality.

Introduction

Building and using roads, skid trails, landings, and stream and wetland crossings can cause nonpoint source pollution. Operators can locate *control points* and connect them to form the most efficient layout for roads, trails, landings, stream and wetland crossings, and other project features. This will limit erosion, help meet landowner objectives, improve safety, and reduce costs.

Where Used

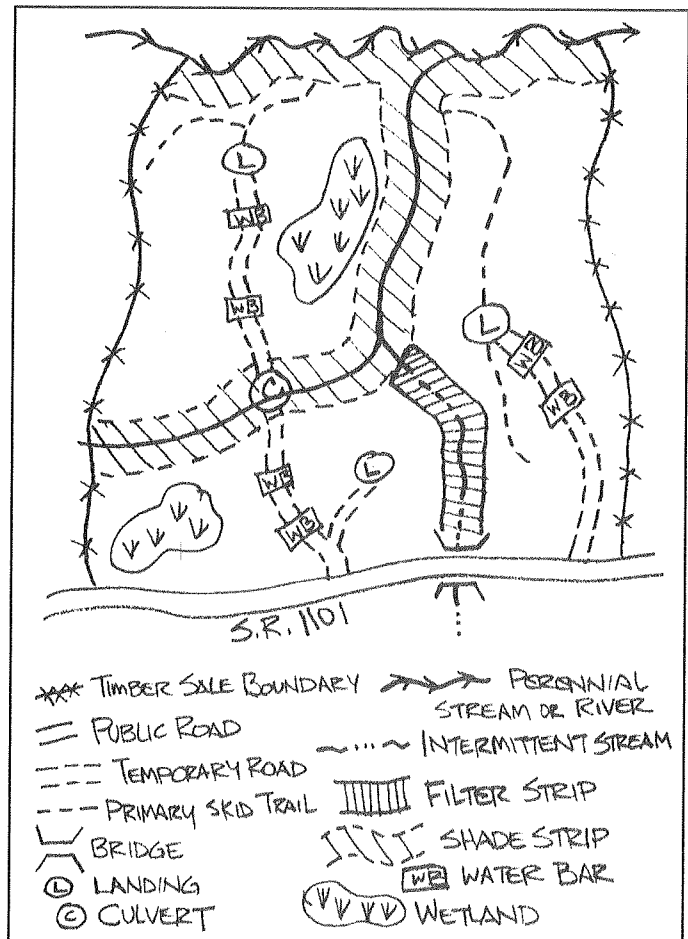
Identify control points when planning any forest management activity.

Application

Control points provide a framework for planning access and activity on a site. To begin planning, locate topographic features that will make construction of roads, landings, or other facilities easier. Next, find areas that limit construction (e.g., property lines, gas and power lines, rock bluffs, steep terrain, cultural resources).

Select a safe, effective access point. This is Control Point A. Identify routes that avoid the need for crossing streams or wetlands, or, if necessary, that cross them at appropriate sites. These are the B control points.

Next, locate a potential landing. This is Control Point C. If there are any steep slopes, they may become Control Point D. Potential gravel sites, locations of wildlife dens, or other features may become other control points.



Site planning map

Create a map with all control points marked. This will help everyone understand features to avoid or use.

Here are the major control points, summarized:

- **Control Point A (access to the area);**
- **Control Point B (stream/wetland crossing);**
- **Control Point C (landing location);**
- **Control Point D (steep topography).**

When planning access to a tract:

- ▶ Minimize the total number and mileage of roads and trails.
- ▶ Try to link roads and trails with other uses on neighboring lands.
- ▶ Avoid building roads and trails in the bottom of a draw. In the winter, you may need to make an exception, due to the difficulty of scaling icy or snow-packed hills.
- ▶ Consult an engineer for help planning roads and skid trails.
- ▶ Consult your state's Best Management Practices booklet for more information about planning the location of roads, landings, and skid trails.
- ▶ Use topographic maps, aerial photos, plat maps, and other tools as well as thorough reconnaissance of the site when planning your operation.

Advantages

Siting and using control points gives the operator a clear plan. It minimizes damage and reduces construction and maintenance costs.

Disadvantages

Siting roads, skid trails, landings, and stream or wetland crossings requires more planning time, especially for field reconnaissance.

Related Fact Sheets in This Series

Managing Water on Roads, Skid Trails, and Landings (FS-6971); Earth-Berm Water Bars (FS-6972); Using Logging Debris or Logs to Build Water Bars (FS-6973); Conveyor Belt Water Bars (FS-6974); Broad-Based Dips (FS-6975); Open-Top Culverts (FS-6976); Shaping Roads and Trails (FS-6977); Roadside and Diversion Ditches (FS-6978); Cross-Drainage Culverts (FS-6979); Project Closure (FS-6980); Making and Using Measurement Tools—Basal Area (FS-6981); and Making and Using Measurement Tools—Slope (FS-6982).

Cooperators

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