

# Forest Management Techniques—Streamside Management Zones

**Streamside Management Zones are defined by Montana Law as the Streamside Management Zone Law. The Law is administered by the Montana Department of Natural Resources.**

## The law applies to:

Any landowner or operator conducting a series of commercial forest practices that will access, harvest, or regenerate trees on a defined land area for commercial purposes on private, state, or federal lands.

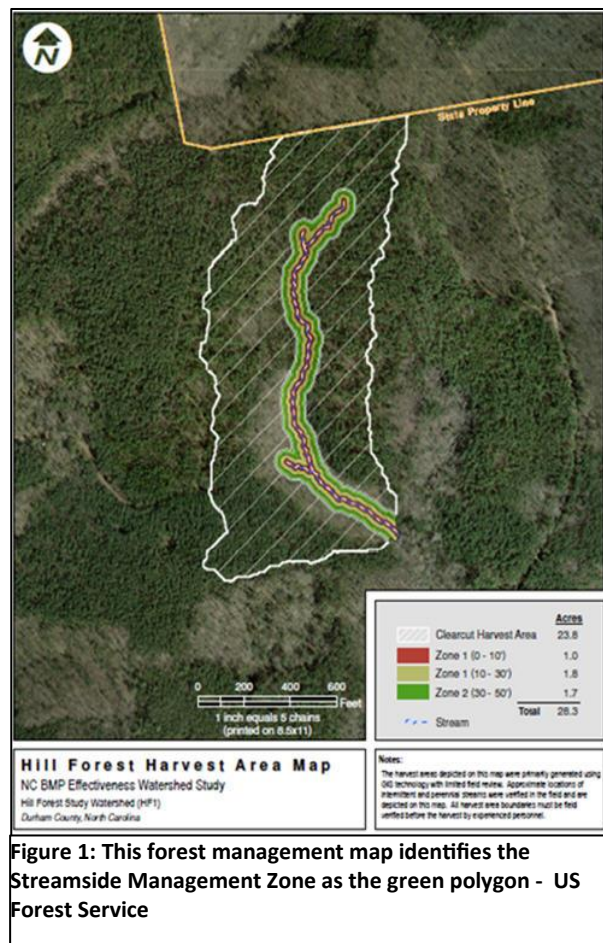
**The law prohibits the following timber harvest activities within at least 50 feet of any stream, lake, or other body of water (Figure 1):**

- Broadcast burning.
- Operating wheeled or tracked vehicles except on established roads.
- Clear cutting.
- Constructing roads in the Streamside Management Zone except when necessary to cross a stream or wetland.
- Handling, storing, applying, or disposing of hazardous or toxic material in a manner that pollutes streams, lakes, or wetlands or that may cause damage or injury to humans, land, animals, or plants.
- Casting road material into a stream, wetland, or watercourse.
- Depositing slash in streams or other water bodies.

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) must approve any exceptions to these prohibited practices.

## The law was adopted:

- To protect the quality and quantity of forest waters.
- To conserve the integrity of Montana's streamside zones.



**Additional Information:**

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation  
2705 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT 59801  
(406) 542-4300

Local DNRC Land Office [www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/Assistance/](http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/Assistance/)

<http://dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/Assistance/Practices/Documents/SMZ.pdf>

**Sources:**

A Guide to Stream Permitting in Montana. 2015. Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

Montana – A Guide to the Streamside Management Zone Law and Rules. 2006. Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.



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