

3.4 TIMBER HARVESTING IN HIGH-USE RECREATION AREAS

BACKGROUND

Minimizing conflicts between timber harvesting and recreational use can leave visitors with a positive impression of forest management.

The primary exposure many people have to timber harvesting occurs when they're hiking, camping, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, or enjoying other recreational activities on managed lands. Whether harvesting near trails on their own land or harvesting in proximity to recreational areas on adjacent lands, a landowner's actions can significantly affect the public's perception of harvesting, for better or for worse. Attention to the impact of harvesting on recreational uses can enhance the public's recreational experience and create a positive impression of forest management.

OBJECTIVE

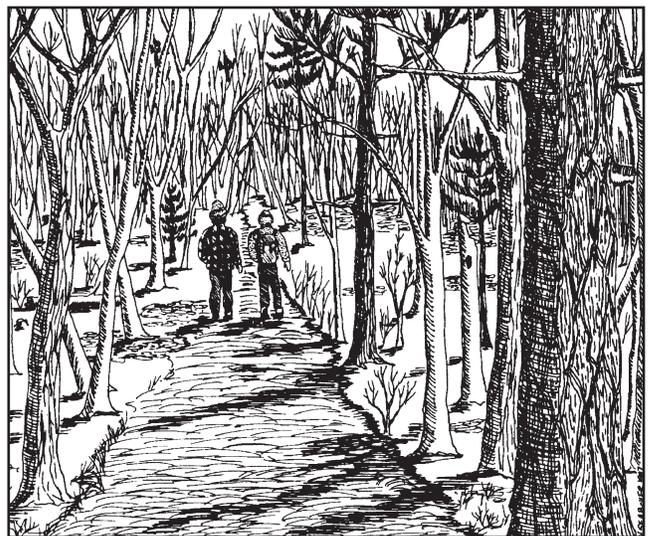
Minimize the visual and audible impacts of timber harvesting in or near areas used for recreation.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Many hiking trails use old logging routes and logging roads often become new hiking trails.
- Recreational use can conflict with forest management activities.
- Scheduling a timber harvest during periods of low recreational use may not coincide with the best operating conditions.
- Limiting recreational access during harvest operations may be the safest alternative.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- ✓ Before harvest, erect signs to inform, educate, and warn recreational users about harvesting activities and alert people to safety concerns.
- ✓ Notify abutters, recreational user groups, conservation commissions, or others who may be affected. Consider having a local newspaper run a story on the timber harvest.
- ✓ Monitor the job on a regular basis to identify and solve problems in a timely fashion.
- ✓ Leave large, attractive trees in high-use public areas.
- ✓ Lay out skid trails and roads with future recreational uses in mind, so they can be incorporated into trail systems.



3.4: Timber Harvesting in High-Use Recreation Areas

- ✓ Leave uncut or partially cut buffer zones along recreational trails. Limit the number of skid-trail crossings, keeping them at right angles to the recreational trails and angling them just beyond the buffer zone to minimize sight lines down the skid trails.
- ✓ Lop tree tops 2 feet or less in high-use areas. Otherwise lop tops 2 to 4 feet above the ground. Where deer severely disrupt natural regeneration, leave slash higher to protect new seedlings.
- ✓ Conduct disruptive phases of management operations such as road or landing construction during periods of low recreational use.
- ✓ When harvesting operations can't avoid peak recreational use, consider the following:
 - Temporarily relocate recreational trails away from the management activity.
 - Reduce the impact of noisy equipment by modifying working hours, shutting down idling equipment, reducing truck noise (by using lower rpm's) to and from the landing, and consider using equipment with noise-reducing features.
- ✓ Limit skidding on recreational trails. During the harvest, protect recreational trails impacted by skidding from erosion by using best management practices (BMPs). After harvesting, remove woody material, smooth ruts, and seed as necessary.
- ✓ Invite the public to tour your woodlot to learn more about harvesting operations.

CROSS REFERENCES

1.5 Staying Safe Working in the Woods; 3.1 Timber Harvesting Systems; 3.2 Logging Aesthetics; 3.3 Aesthetics of Truck Roads, Skid Trails and Landings; 7.8 Cultural Resources.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Jones, G. T. 1993. *A Guide to Logging Aesthetics: Practical Tips for Loggers, Foresters, and Landowners*. Natural Resource, Agriculture, and Engineering Service. NRAES-60. NRAES Cooperative Extension, Ithaca, N.Y. 28 p.

N.H. Dept. of Resources and Economic Development, Division of Forests and Lands. 2004. *Best Management Practices for Erosion Control on Timber Harvesting Operations in New Hampshire*. State of New Hampshire. http://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource000247_Rep266.pdf Accessed March 13, 2010.