



Private Forest Accord Updates: Road Construction & Inventory

Summary

The rule changes have two key areas of focus: minimizing opportunities for sediment to enter waters of the state and ensuring unimpeded fish passage. The proposed rules aim to reach these goals by using road construction and design methods that locate roads away from streams as well as minimize sediment and direct sediment away from streams. The stream crossing designs will closely match the natural stream conditions to allow for better fish passage. Additionally, the new rules include a process to identify and correct existing road-related issues.

Rule Changes for Hydrologic Connectivity

- The new rules emphasize minimizing hydrologic connectivity, such as a road ditch that runs directly into a stream crossing, throughout the road network this includes:
- Directing routes of drainage of road runoff to waters of the state
- Identifying and correcting existing connectivity
- Limiting the amount of connectivity in all new construction and reconstruction

Rule Changes to Fish Passages

- Additional rules (detailing stream crossing design, construction, and written plans) are a significant element of the new rules. This includes:
- A process to identify and improve stream crossings to ensure unimpeded fish passage within a 20-year time frame
- “Stream simulation” is the required fish stream crossing strategy when feasible
- The requirement to design all stream crossings to convey a 100-year peak flow

Rule Changes to Critical Locations

The rules add specificity to current rules. They now require avoiding placing roads in sensitive areas, known as “critical locations.” Road construction in critical locations is limited to instances where alternate locations are not feasible and require written plans when locating roads in these areas.

Critical locations include very steep slopes, areas with landslide hazard, through the toe of deep-seated landslide deposits, activities within a riparian area for more than 500 feet, locations within 50 feet of all streams, and all wetlands over a quarter acre.

Forest Road Inventory and Assessment (FRIA)

The FRIA is a five-year process in which large forestland owners identify and correct road-related issues. The first five years are the inventory phase in which a comprehensive road network inventory must be completed. Years five through 20 are the implementation phase in which landowners must complete the necessary improvements.

Small Forestland Owners (SFOs)

All the road rules apply to small forestland owners except for the FRIA process. Small forestland owners will be required to submit a Road Condition Assessment when notifying for any timber harvest operations. Some improvements identified by the road condition assessment, such as fish stream crossing, may qualify for state funding for repair or replacement.

