

Private Forest Accord Rulemaking: Road Construction & Inventory



Summary

The changes in the draft rules 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 accomplish these goals by employing road construction and design methods that locate roads away from streams as well as minimize sediment production and direct sediment away from streams. Specifying stream crossing designs that closely match the natural stream conditions to allow for unimpeded fish passage. Additionally, the new rules include a process to identify and correct road-related issues in existing road networks.

Rule changes for hydrologic connectivity:

The draft rules emphasize minimizing hydrologic connectivity, such as a road ditch that runs directly into a stream crossing, throughout the road network this includes:

- Direct routes of drainage of road runoff to waters of the state
- Identify and correct existing connectivity
- Limit 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 proposed rules. The draft rules establish:

- 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 proposed rules add specificity to current rules. They would require avoiding locating 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 draft 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.

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