



Pennsylvania Forest Products Association

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News for Immediate Release

Oct. 28, 2011

Conservation District Staffers Get Hands-On Training on Logging BMPs

State College – County conservation district technicians from across the state visited a logging operation in Centre County this week for hands-on training. The training is part of an effort to improve district coordination with timber harvesters on implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) and increased compliance with state erosion control regulations.

The tour was part of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) annual training update for county conservation district staff involved in erosion and sediment control and stormwater management, held in State College this week.

"Our goal was to help district staff transfer the erosion and sedimentation regulations and guidance documents to real world situations," explained Paul Reining, Forest Specialist for the Wayne Conservation District, who worked with DEP to develop the training session.

The group utilized an active timber harvest on 20 acres in Potter Township, Centre County, being conducted by logger Martin Melville. Melville also serves as a Director with the Centre County Conservation District.

"Training at this site provided an excellent example of a typical smaller-sized timber harvest, with some challenges of moderate slope, a small stream and localized spring seeps," explained Reining. "We greatly appreciate Mr. Melville volunteering his operation for this training."

After receiving a demonstration of mechanized equipment utilized in harvesting, the assembly then broke up into smaller groups to inspect the BMPs designed to control erosion and water run-off from the site. BMPs include items such as temporary bridging of stream crossings; water bars and broad-based dips on haul roads, and mechanized equipment avoidance of wetland areas.

The group then reassembled to share their assessment of BMPs that were implemented on the site. The group also shared experiences on how to best offer guidance to loggers on ways to improve their BMP implementation.

"One of the benefits of the training was the interaction between the experienced personnel from the more forested counties and technicians who were newer to the job or located in more suburban counties where timber harvests might not be quite as common," stated Bill Himes, regional engineer at DEP in Altoona.

The efforts of DEP, county conservation districts and industry have helped to ensure timber harvests have a negligible impact on Pennsylvania's water quality. According to the 2010 Pennsylvania Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report (305/303 report), less than two-tenths of one percent (0.02%) of the stream impairment in the state is due to silviculture activities.

The training also included a briefing on safety practices on a harvesting site conducted by PA Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Program Manager Nate Fice. Joe Harding, Director of Forestlands for Penn State, discussed how landowner and forestry objectives ultimately influence the layout of forest roads, stream crossings and skid trails.

The Pennsylvania Forest Products Association and Northern Tier Hardwood Association provided logistical and financial support for the tour and training session.

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