

Alabama's Best Management Practices For Forestry - Investigations and Audits

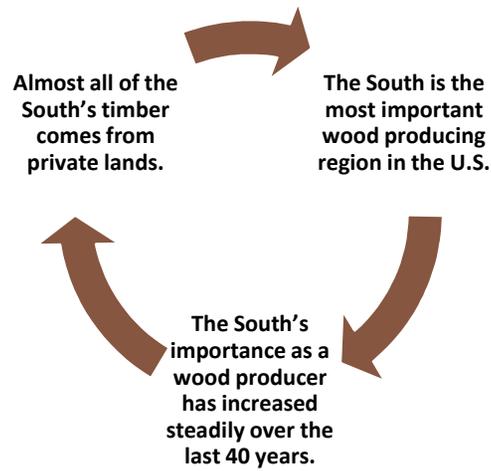
Alabama's River and Streams Network

Camp Meadowbrook, January 15, 2020



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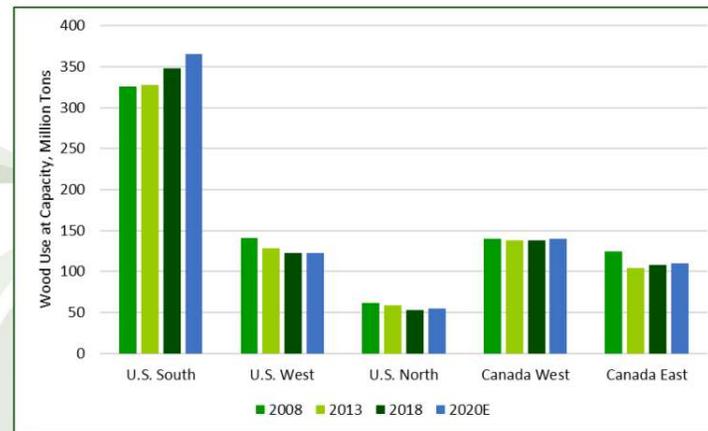


Alabama and the southeastern states are the wood basket to U. S. and global economies.

Regional Capacity



History and Future of North American Forest Industry Capacity by Region



Source: Forisk Study: North American Forest Industry Capacity

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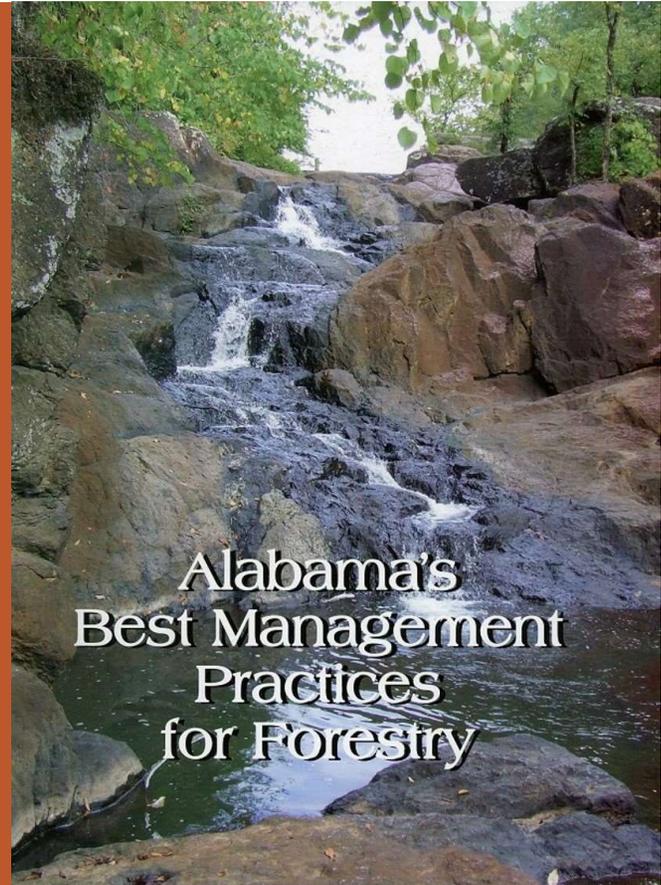
Alabama Forest Timber Production



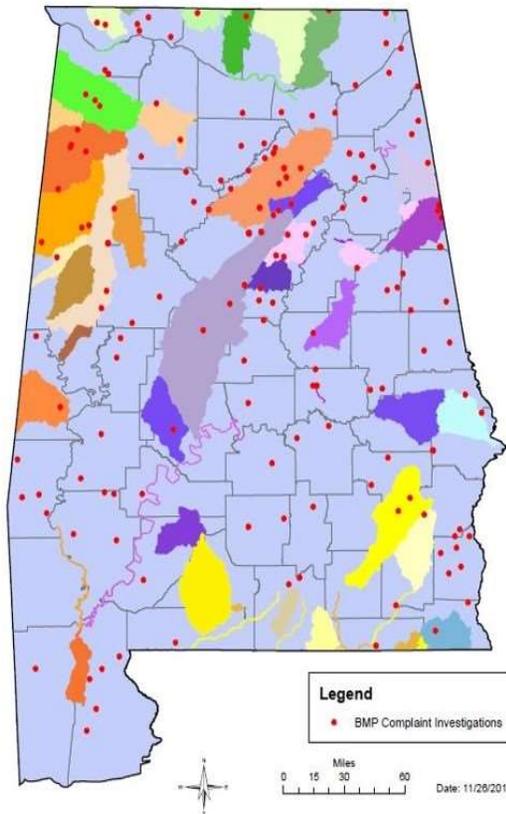
Source: Alabama Forestry Commission, U.S. Forest Service

Best Management Practices and 3rd Party Agreements

- Alabama's Best Management Practices for Forestry were first published in 1993. These are voluntary guidelines that have essentially become mandatory due to 3rd party certifications/agreements.
- Third party agreements have been put in place through SFI, ATFS, and FSC. Companies must abide by standards or risk decertification and potential loss of revenue.
- Loggers must abide by BMP's and 3rd party agreements or risk the wood buying facility not accepting their raw wood products.
- AFC works cooperatively with ADEM, USACE and the SFI state implementation committee to monitor compliance. AFC is not a regulatory agency. ADEM and the SFI state implementation committee are the entities with the ability to affect change if needed.

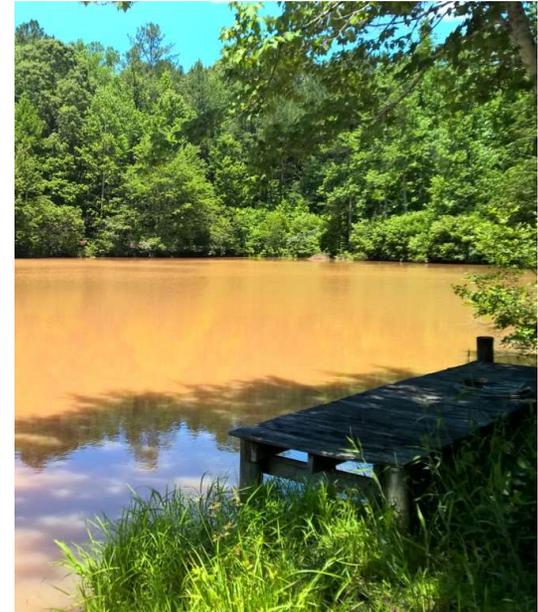


BMP Complaint Investigations 2015 to Date



AFC BMP Complaint Investigations

- There was no formal AFC process to record BMP complaints/investigations prior to 2008. Since 2008, complaints have been recorded/investigated and appropriate actions taken accordingly.
- The image to the left indicates complaint locations since 2015 and highlights the SHU's. Since 2008, there have typically been 40-50 complaints per year with 20-30 of them being valid.
- From my professional experiences, there would have been more complaints/year during the decades leading up to BMP implementation and 3rd party agreements.
- Average acres cut per year is about 750,000. Probably in the neighborhood of 7,500 - 9,500 different logging operations annually.
- AFC leadership emphasizes the importance of conducting BMP inspections to ensure Alabama's forest and water resources are protected in an ecologically sound manner.



We See it All!

AFC employees see the good and bad while conducting BMP inspections or investigating complaints. Good practices far outweigh the ugly! Logging activities that result in the ugly are quite expensive to remediate and hard lessons are learned quickly!

Alabama Forestry Commission

Best Management Practices

Implementation Rates

Best management Practices are monitored using a framework developed cooperatively among the 13 southern states of the Southern Group of State Foresters. In 2019, 256 randomly selected sites were inspected across the entire state resulting in the following BMP implementation rates:

Parameters	2009		2019	
	Number of Sites	% Implementation	Number of Sites	% Implementation
Harvesting	246	?	197	99%
Site Prep	70	98%	44	100%
Forest Roads	243	93%	248	97%
Stream Crossings	125	96%	83	98%
Streamside Mgt. Zones	202	92%	197	98%
Firebreaks	84	90%	81	99%
Chemical Application	120	100%	107	100%
Overall	246	97%	256	98%

Implementation surveys have been completed for the following years: 2009, 2010, 2013, 2016, and 2019. In the years in between the implementation surveys, inspections are made on active logging sites for prevention and education—usually 255 inspections per year based on the previous year’s timber volume removal.

What Does the Future Hold?

- I can't speak for the industry, but I believe they and the AFC will continue to be proactive vs reactive in the future in regards to BMP implementation.
- The forestry community has come along way in protecting Alabama's natural resources through BMPs and these efforts will continue in the future.
- Maintenance of roads, waterbars, culverts, and other activities associated with BMPs is important and falls on the landowner after logging and reforestation/revegetation activities have ceased.



AFC Mission as it Relates to BMPs, Water Quality and the ESA?



- Ensure water quality and flow issues are addressed through BMP's – protect Alabama's aquatic biodiversity and water resources
- Maintain knowledgeable staff and inform constituents of ongoing actions
- Stay engaged with USFWS to be a part of the solution
- Be proactive, engaged and open-minded in the ESA process
- Solicit for 4(d) rules when and where needed
- Assist USFWS with gaining access to private property for population assessment surveys

