



# Random Monitoring: the Way to Encourage BMPs

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**B**ecause of increasing concerns about Alabama's Best Management Practices (BMPs), the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) has created a new position to address this issue. BMP Forester Jeremy Lowery will put more emphasis throughout the entire state on a constant review of BMP complaints and aerial monitoring. Each complaint is to be handled in such manner as to ensure Alabamians that the Alabama Forestry Commission is dedicated to this issue.

There are many rivers and waterway systems in Alabama, all of which need protection. The Alabama Forestry Commission intends to monitor these waterways through various means: the air, citizens of the state, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), and Commission employees.

Aerial monitoring is probably the most intensive of these measures. The state is divided into four regions, two of which will be flown each fiscal year. Initial flights serve to spot possible areas of silvicultural activity. For this year, 51 locations in the Northeast Region and 61 locations in the Northwest Region have been randomly selected for inspection.

Trained observers will complete the inspections using six basic criteria: stream management zones, stream crossings, forest roads, timber harvesting, reforestation stand management, and forest wetland management. If an inadequacy is noted for any of these six criteria and permission is granted, an on-the-ground inspection will be completed. If a problem exists, recommendations will be made as to how it can be fixed and a 30-day period will be allowed for the resolution of the issue. At this point, another inspection will then be completed to either close the

case, or if the problem has not been resolved, ADEM will take over to ensure that the issue is resolved. A Memorandum of Agreement between ADEM and the AFC allows the Commission to intervene to help landowners clear up issues without fine or prosecution of any sort prior to an ADEM inspection.

Complaints will also be received from ADEM, concerned citizens, and AFC personnel, which will be handled in the same manner as the aerial reports.

At this time, there are 22 complaints on file for the 2005-2006 Fiscal Year. Of these, ten required handling by ADEM, and twelve were resolved through cooperation with suggestions made by the AFC.

It is the goal of the Alabama Forestry Commission to educate everyone about BMPs in order to prevent problems before they happen. After all, it is up to us to protect the future of our state's waterways. ♻️