



# Alabama Ranks High in Water Quality Report

**A**ccording to a recent regional Best Management Practices (BMP) Implementation report, Alabama ranked among top-performing states in the category of BMP Implementation for water quality in the harvesting of timber and other forest operations. In September's Implementation of Forestry Best Management Practices: 2012 Southern Region Report, published by the Water Resources Committee of the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF), Alabama demonstrated a 97 percent overall BMP implementation rate. The average overall BMP implementation rate for the region combined was 92 percent. Alabama consistently ranked among the highest BMP implementation rates within the individual categories as well.

The Water Resources Committee, a subcommittee of the SGSF, adopted a monitoring framework to track and assess the implementation of non-regulatory forestry BMPs in 1997. However, although the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) had been monitoring BMP implementation since 1990, it did not adopt the SGSF monitoring protocol until 2009 when the

agency joined the 12 other Southeastern state forestry agencies comprising the SGSF. Grouped into seven categories according to the primary forestry activity they relate to, these BMPs are statistically monitored throughout the year. The seven categories are combined to allow for assessment of the overall BMP implementation rate that measures how effectively the water resources of Alabama are being protected.

"Water is a major concern right now," said State Forester Linda Casey. "Because of the role forests play in water-related issues, the Alabama Forestry Commission considers the protection of water resources to be among its top priorities. Water is an essential element for life and livelihood. The forests of Alabama are of vital importance for ensuring that the quantity and quality of water are maintained and improved for current and future use. Additionally, Alabama's forests generate significant contributions to the economic and social well-being of the state through provision of raw materials for the forest products industry, habitat for fish and wildlife, outdoor recreation, and a host of

other opportunities too numerous to mention. The AFC's commitment to protecting the water resources of Alabama extends far beyond the monitoring framework for implementation."

The Alabama Forestry Commission believes that education is crucial for the prevention and mitigation of threats that would impact the water resources of the state. To that end, the AFC routinely conducts BMP training for forest industry professionals, state agencies, and other interested parties. By facilitating communication and the exchange of information between the various stakeholders within the water resources community, and the general public, the AFC makes a significant contribution to the protection of water resources.

To review the 2012 Southern Region Report, go to [www.forestry.alabama.gov/PDFs/SGSF\\_BMP\\_Report\\_2012.pdf](http://www.forestry.alabama.gov/PDFs/SGSF_BMP_Report_2012.pdf). To learn more about Alabama's Best Management Practices for Forestry or Coastal Pre-Harvest Guide for Landowners, visit [www.forestry.alabama.gov](http://www.forestry.alabama.gov). ♣