

FACT SHEET

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Has the Logging Sediment Control Act Been Effective?

The West Virginia Logging Sediment Control Act (LSCA) was passed by the West Virginia Legislature in 1992. The law was unique because it required loggers to: (1) receive education about Best Management Practices (BMP's), (2) take chainsaw safety training, and (3) become certified in first aid. The LSCA was recognized by the National Woodland Owner's Association in 1993 as the best new environmental legislation in the United States.

At the time, the LSCA was passed, West Virginia was experiencing its "second great forest." The forests of the State which had been removed to make room for agriculture and by early lumbering activities were once again mature enough to cut. The demands on the forest were growing, not only from the economy surrounding the wood and wood product industries, but from all other ancillary uses such as tourism, outdoor recreation and sites for second homes. The importance of the State's forests was being recognized to a larger extent than ever and the needs to perpetuate and protect the resource was evident.

After a decade of use, the objective for the law is as succinct today as it was initially – "plan your logging operation and keep the mud out of the stream." The success of the program, however, is not solely measured by what is easily seen. An observer easily finds logging roads and landings reclaimed with lush, green grass, but the foundation of the program is what is not so easily seen. One of the basics of the law is education and today landowners, foresters, loggers and various special interest groups are all working together to insure the future of the resource. Forest land holdings are being managed by professionals, land use planning is being addressed in a written management plan, logging operations are being designed properly, road systems are being built with proper grades and drainage, landings are being located outside of the filter strips and all operations are reclaimed so that water quality will not be degraded.

Has the LSCA been effective? Without a doubt! Can we do even better? Again, without a doubt! Scientific research has continued to provide us with the information we need so that we can insure clean water and a forest resource in perpetuity.

Historical data, 1992 through 2001:

- Logging notifications filed with the WV Division of Forestry – 27,838. High – 3454 in 1998; Low – 2703 in 1997.
- Acres logged -2,578,826. High – 296,838 in 1997; Low – 235,182 in 2001.
- Investigations (Complaints and compliance checks) – 18,237.
- Loggers trained in BMP's – 14,283.
- Compliance obtained with water quality aspects of LSCA – 80%.

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