

Summary of guideline revisions initially approved by the MFRC

March 2012

Revision Topic	Site-level Committee Recommendations	Site-level Committee Justification	MFRC Decision	Decision date
Harvest monitoring – create a harvest monitoring guideline	Do not create a harvest monitoring guideline. Consensus	Unnecessary, as owners/managers already monitor according to their needs.	Approve the SL Committee recommendation	1.25.12
Conifer retention – remove balsam fir from the recommendation to retain conifer regeneration in mixed stands	Do not change existing conifer regeneration guideline. Add information on potential for NPC modification when balsam fir regeneration is retained where fire is excluded from the system. Consensus	Concern that balsam fir is often the only conifer present in many fire-dependent stands, and removal from those systems (when fire is excluded) could negatively impact wildlife (i.e., result in no conifer component in the succeeding stand).	Approve the SL Committee recommendation **Add in footnote to Table acknowledging deviation from guideline for insect and disease considerations***	1.25.12
Erosion control on segments – do not require erosion control on slopes <5%, do not require erosion control in areas with low risk of impacting water quality	Clarify language to identify situation where erosion control is “needed and necessary” Consensus	Erosion control practices are currently recommended only where “necessary and needed” and it is reasonable to clarify the situations where it would apply. Clarification utilizes definitions used during monitoring assessments, and emphasizes the potential for water quality impacts rather than soil productivity (which is given equal standing in current guidelines).	Approve the SL Committee recommendation	1.25.12

<p>Allowable infrastructure – increase from the current 3% of harvest area recommendation</p>	<p>Change to 3 tier recommendation based on harvest size. Consensus</p>	<p>Recognition that relative allowable infrastructure is unreasonable / impossible to achieve at small harvest sizes, and the need to have achievable guidelines for forest certification. Recommended amounts are based on trends and patterns in past monitoring data.</p> <p>3% for cuts greater than 30 acres 5% for cuts between 20-30 acres Less than 1 acre for cuts less than 20 acres</p>	<p>Approve the SL Committee recommendation</p>	<p>1.25.12</p>
<p>Leave trees – clumps vs. scattered option</p>	<p>Allow scattered trees and clumps to be used in concert with preference for clumps. Emphasize achieving silvicultural goals rather than ease of compliance. Consensus</p>	<p>There is a need for more flexibility in guidelines, focusing on silviculture (i.e., planning to achieve a desired future condition) rather than retention with no defined plan. Clumps only would be just as prescriptive as scattered only.</p>	<p>Approve the SL Committee recommendation</p>	<p>1.25.12</p>
<p>Leave trees – limit retention of sawlog-sized leave trees</p>	<p>No change in current guideline. Non-unanimous vote (5-1)</p>	<p>No new information to justify the change. Existing research / theory supports retention of a range of leave tree sizes and condition. Some members recognized economic concerns, but concluded it would be politically untenable and ecologically unjustified to change the guideline.</p>	<p>Modify language of leave tree guidelines to include consideration of economic value when choosing which leave trees to retain</p>	<p>3.21.12</p>

<p>Leave trees – preferred location. Current recommendation is for even distribution.</p>	<p>Remove language recommending even distribution within harvest site. Emphasize retention patterns that meet wildlife and silvicultural goals, improve operability. Consensus</p>	<p>Largely based on desire to increase flexibility of existing guideline. Emphasis placed on planning for a desired future condition which may be unachievable with even distribution only. Some species will benefit from even distribution, some from uneven distribution.</p>	<p>Approve the SL Committee recommendation</p>	<p>1.25.12</p>
<p>Leave trees – harvest size minimum where leave tree guidelines would apply.</p>	<p>Split recommendation (3-3 vote). Rec 1 - Do not recommend leave trees on cuts <20 acres in size. Rec – 2. No change in current guideline</p>	<p>Recommendation in favor of <20 ac. modification largely justified to make smaller cuts more profitable. Recommendation against the change justified because there is no information to guide identification of the harvest size where the cost of retention outweighs reduced benefits of leave trees.</p>	<p>Approve recommendation 2 of the SL Committee (no change in current guideline)</p>	<p>3.21.12</p>
<p>Biomass – examine appropriateness of the current recommendation to retain 1/3 of fine woody debris</p>	<p>No change in current guideline. Consensus</p>	<p>No new information to guide change in general retention amount. Recognition that amount could change in future as research results from ongoing studies (in particular the UMN project funded by the MFRC and DOE) become available.</p>	<p>Approve the SL Committee recommendation</p>	<p>1.25.12</p>

<p>Biomass – modify the recommended retention amount based on site conditions (e.g., stand condition, amount of down woody debris, etc.)</p>	<p>Modify the existing guideline to adjust the amount of cut top/limb retention depending on the amount of incidental breakage (more if < 10-15% breakage, less if incidental breakage is >10%). Consensus.</p>	<p>Current recommendations for fine woody debris retention are based on an assumed incidental breakage of 10-15% during harvesting. Emphasize the intended outcome (33% retention total) rather than the means of achievement. Reasonable to adjust retention if breakage differs from the assumed amount</p>	<p>Approve the SL Committee recommendation</p>	<p>1.25.12</p>
<p>Biomass – exceptions to the fine woody debris retention recommendation</p>	<p>New guideline that acknowledges acceptability to retain more or less fine woody debris depending on silvicultural objectives, with specific reference to examples provided in guidebook. (pages BHG 32-34) Consensus</p>	<p>Some silvicultural prescriptions may require more or less fine woody debris retention (e.g., slash removal to facilitate planting, or greater slash retention to inhibit browse) but the guidelines currently do not explicitly recognize this.</p>	<p>Approve the SL Committee recommendation</p>	<p>1.25.12</p>
<p>Biomass – examine appropriateness of biomass harvesting guidelines as related to salvage harvesting</p>	<p>Do not create salvage harvest biomass guidelines (No change in current guideline). Consensus</p>	<p>Focus of the evaluation was on potentially modifying the amount of slash retention at salvage harvests. Committee members generally agreed that there may be times when more (e.g., fire) or less (e.g., insect/disease) slash should be retained, and it would be complicated to create situation-specific guidelines.</p>	<p>Approve the SL Committee recommendation</p>	<p>1.25.12</p>

<p>Biomass – incorporating the biomass harvest guidelines into the pre-existing guidelines for clarity and reconciliation of conflicting guidelines.</p>	<p>Keep BHG chapter in guidebook. Draft language for reconciliation to be considered by Committee (5.11.11 meeting). Consensus Draft reconciliation language for slash retention at all harvest types adopted. Consensus</p>	<p>The biomass harvesting guidelines are relatively new, created in response to new concerns which are still evolving. Interest in keeping the biomass guidelines readily accessible in a standalone chapter. Slash reconciliation language created for all harvest types.</p>	<p>Approve the SL Committee recommendation. Modify the definition of slash to note that it includes both CWD and FWD.</p>	<p>New language under development MFRC vote on 3.21.12</p>
<p>Creation of a rutting metric</p>	<p>Do not create rutting metric (no change in current guidelines) Consensus</p>	<p>Creation of a metric is too detailed for the wide range of operating conditions in the State, and field application could be difficult / time consuming. Impacts and extent of the problem not clear enough from literature and monitoring data to warrant creation of the metric.</p>	<p>Approve the SL Committee recommendation</p>	<p>Initial MFRC approval on 1.25.12</p>
<p>Promoting disturbance / compression of moss in wetland crossings to improve regeneration.</p>	<p>Do not recommend compression of moss in wetland crossings (no change in current guideline). Add information related to soil disturbance in general (e.g., some disturbance is acceptable / desirable). Consensus</p>	<p>Recommendation would be too detailed for the broad scope of the guidelines (i.e., it would apply to site-preparation activities in black spruce peatlands only).</p>	<p>Approve the SL Committee recommendation</p>	<p>Initial MFRC approval on 1.25.12</p>

<p>Creation of invasive species guidelines</p>	<p>Create some general invasive species guidelines focused on limiting the spread of invasive plants during timber harvesting operations. Identify existing resources and regulations for use by resource managers. Consensus (draft guidelines approved on 8.26.11)</p>	<p>Invasive species pose a serious threat to sustainable forestry. Focus on plants and timber harvesting because of traditional guideline focus and greater potential for landowner control. Emphasis on recognizing and planning for the threat because of greater efficacy than post-establishment control. Recognition of other spread vectors (e.g., OHV's), but little interest in attempting to address them.</p>	<p>Recommended guidelines not approved by MFRC. Some of the scoping information related to the threat of invasive species and existing laws to be included as additional information in the general section of the guidebook. Issue referred to the IMC for further consideration and evaluation.</p>	<p>3.21.12</p>
<p>Riparian Guidelines – watershed condition</p>	<p>Create a general guideline to consider watershed condition when developing management plans (consensus, draft language approved on 11.16.11)</p>	<p>Recognition that wildlife and water quality related functions of riparian areas are heavily dependent on the overall condition of the watershed or landscape. Guideline was deliberately kept general to account for the range of watershed conditions in the state, and the insufficiency of existing research to identify conditions where detrimental effects will occur (e.g., amount of developed or recently harvested area when detrimental effects will occur)</p>	<p>Recommended guideline included as an additional consideration only (i.e., it is not a guideline) in the beginning of the general guideline section of the guidebook</p>	<p>3.21.12</p>

<p>Riparian Guidelines – RMZ widths</p>	<p>Adopt the recommended RMZ widths of the RSTC for streams and lakes (165 ft for all trout streams, lakes, and tributaries; 120 feet for all others). Maintain existing widths (50 ft.) for streams <3 ft wide, and lakes and wetlands <1ac. in size. (consensus, informal agreement on 9.16.11, formal approval on 11.16.11)</p>	<p>The Council convened the Riparian Science Technical Committee to assess current science related to riparian areas, with the intent of their report being used as a technical basis for revision of the riparian guidelines. RSTC width recommendations are consensus, science-based views from technical experts in wildlife, water quality, soils, and silviculture. Maintain existing widths for small streams and lakes because these water features were not addressed by the RSTC.</p>	<p>Approve the SL Committee recommendation</p>	<p>3.21.12</p>
<p>Riparian Guidelines – RMZ residual basal area</p>	<p>Recommend a residual basal area of 60 ft² for all RMZs. (consensus)</p>	<p>RSTC recommended residual basal area of 75 ft² is the average value for fully stocked stands of common species in Minnesota. Committee recommended a lower value appropriate to maintenance of longer-lived species which are generally recommended for riparian areas (most instances – not all). Value is the minimum amount of residual basal area for fully stocked stands rather than the average calculated by the RSTC.</p>	<p>Approve the SL Committee recommendation</p>	<p>3.21.12</p>

Riparian Guidelines – Counting RMZ area towards leave tree area	Allow RMZ area to count towards the 5% leave tree area (consensus)	The existing guideline does not allow RMZ area to be counted towards leave tree area recommendations as a way to address the potential for windthrow in RMZ's. Since the RSTC-recommended widths account for windthrow potential, and RMZ's serve similar functional purpose as a leave tree clump, it is reasonable to allow RMZ area to count towards the leave tree recommendations.	Approve the SL Committee recommendation	3.21.12
Seasonal ponds – creation of buffer zones around ponds	Do not recommend creation of buffer zones around seasonal ponds. Update definition of seasonal ponds as recommended by the RSTC (consensus). Recommend additional research on seasonal ponds including identification of landscape associations, assessment of long-term response to disturbance, and	The RSTC did not reach consensus on the need for buffers around seasonal ponds, but a majority (6 of 9) agreed they were unnecessary. Existing research does not indicate long-term impacts of harvesting adjacent to seasonal ponds. Existing seasonal pond guidelines are sufficient for pond protection; including leave tree requirements being sufficient for establishment of pond buffers at most harvest sizes (see RSTC economic analysis).	Approve the SL Committee recommendation	3.21.12
Field guide	Develop a field guide focused on some of the most critical guidelines related to timber harvesting.	Ongoing	Ongoing	