



FORESTRY Leaflets

December 2020

WQ-11

A Guide to the Forest Harvest Requirements of the Riparian Buffer Rule for: *Goose Creek Watershed.*

On June 15, 2020, revised Forest Harvest Requirements for this Buffer Rule became effective. The newly revised rule is [15A NCAC 02B .0608](#). This Leaflet does not provide legal advice or final interpretation of this Buffer Rule. Contact the [Mooreville Regional Office](#) of the NCDEQ-[Div. of Water Resources](#) (NC-DWR) for guidance.

The North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS) can assist by determining which streams/waterways require this Buffer Rule. Contact the NCFS [Mt. Holly District Office](#) or [Water Quality Forester](#) to request this free service.

1. Where This Buffer Rule Applies

- ✓ Along designated mapped streams and bodies of water (see section 2 below) in the entire Goose Creek watershed of Mecklenburg and Union counties of North Carolina.
- ✓ This watershed is part of Mecklenburg and Union counties, and includes Goose Creek, Stevens Creek, Paddle Branch, Duck Creek, and all their tributaries -- see vicinity map Page 4.

Exemptions

The Buffer Rule does not apply to the following features:

- × Any ephemeral stream (sometimes called slough, swale, gully, draw, or drain).
- × Man-made ditch or canal that is not intended for water navigation or boat access.
- × Man-made pond or lake that is located outside of a natural drainageway.
- × Agricultural/Farm pond.

Contact the NC-DWR for clarifications of these exemptions.

Beaver Impoundments



Beaver ponds are not exempted. On beaver impoundments (beaver ponds, beaver swamps, etc.), the Buffer Rule Zone must begin at the water's edge, even if there is standing timber out in the beaver swamp. If you wish to breach the beaver dam, let the water drain off, and wait for the stream to re-establish its natural course; then you can start the Buffer Rule Zone along the re-established stream channel. If machinery is needed to breach the dam, then a permit may be needed. **Contact the NC-DWR for guidance before disturbing the beaver dam.**

2. Types of Streams & Waterbodies that Require this Buffer Rule

This Buffer Rule applies to 'blueline' Intermittent streams, 'blueline' Perennial streams, ponds, lakes, and estuaries that are approximately shown on the most recently published version of either: (1) a NRCS county soil survey manuscript, or (2) a USGS 1:24000 quad [7.5-minute] topographic map.



****Web Soil Survey and ArcGIS map layers are not acceptable.****



Where to Download Acceptable Maps:

NRCS Soil Survey Manuscripts: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/surveylist/soils/survey/state/?stateId=NC>
 The NCFS has a step-by-step guide (linked below) to locate and download PDF scans of soil survey maps:
https://www.ncforestservice.gov/water_quality/pdf/soilMaps.pdf

USGS Topo Maps: <https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/topoview/viewer/#4/39.98/-100.06>
 Make sure you download the most recent version of the 1:24000 map.

3. Buffer Rule Zone Widths and Starting Points

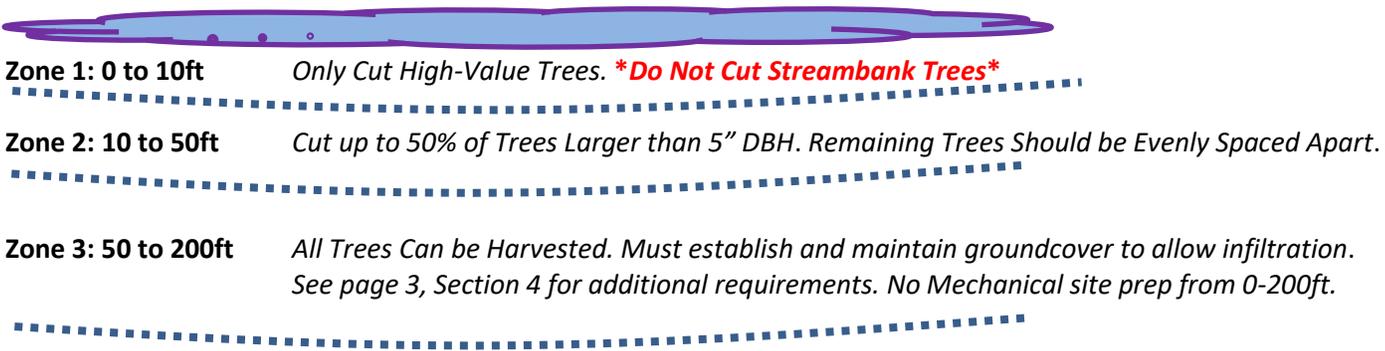
The Goose Creek Buffer Rule has different requirements depending on the stream or waterbody location:

- **If it is within the 100-Year Floodplain, then a 200-foot wide Buffer Rule Zone is required.**
 See Example A below.
- **If it is outside the 100-Year Floodplain, then a 100-foot wide Buffer Rule Zone is required.**
 See Example B below.

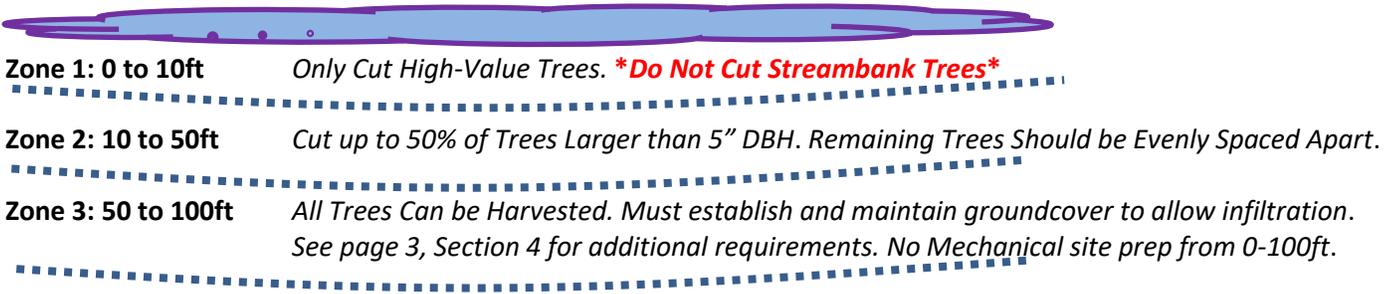
The 100-Year Floodplain is delineated by the North Carolina Floodplain Mapping Program: www.ncfloodmaps.com.

Landowner BMP Tip: For maximum protection of water quality and efficient logging, consider having the timber buyer and logger keep all trees un-cut within the 0 to 50-foot mark.

Example A: Located within 100-Year Floodplain, a 200-foot wide Buffer Rule Zone is required.



Example B: Located outside 100-Year Floodplain, only a 100-foot wide Buffer Rule Zone is required.



The Buffer Rule Zone is measured horizontally on a line perpendicular to the surface water:

For streams: Begin at the most landward limit of the top of bank or the rooted herbaceous vegetation and extend landward on all sides of the stream. Include a bulb radius at head of stream.

For ponds, lakes, reservoirs: Begin at the normal water level and extend landward.

4. Harvesting Timber in the Buffer Rule Zone

Is Your Tract Eligible?

Timber harvesting is only allowed in the entire 100-ft or 200-ft Buffer Rule Zone if:

- ✓ The tract has a forest management plan that was prepared or approved by a Registered Forester; or,
 - ✓ The parcel is enrolled in that county's Present-Use Value (PUV) tax deferral program for forestry use.
- All forest harvesting must comply with the FPGs. The Buffer Rules do not replace the FPGs.
 - Timber felling shall be directed away from the stream or waterbody.
 - Trees are removed in a manner that minimizes disturbance to the soil and remaining vegetation.
 - Skidding shall be directed away from the stream or waterbody, and shall be done in a manner that minimizes soil disturbance and prevents the creation of channels or ruts.
- **Tracked or wheeled vehicles are allowed for harvesting timber where there is no other practical alternative.**



- x **No log decks or sawmill sites are allowed in the entire 100-foot or 200-foot Buffer Rule Zone.**
- x **No tracked or wheeled vehicles are allowed for site prep in the entire 100-ft or 200-ft Buffer Rule Zone.**

Extra Requirements to Harvest in Zone 1 (0 to 10 feet)

- Only "High Value" trees are allowed to be cut:
 - For Pine species, High Value is: DBH is 14" or larger; Or stump diameter is 18" or larger.
 - For non-Pine species, High Value is: DBH is 16" or larger; Or stump diameter is 24" or larger.



- x **No cutting of any tree that has exposed roots visible in the streambank.**

Extra Requirements to Harvest in Zone 2 (10 to 50 feet)

- Harvest no more than 50% of the trees that are larger than 5" DBH.
- Remaining trees in Zone 2 must be as evenly spaced apart as possible.
 - Re-entry for natural forest is allowed every 15 years.
 - Re-entry for plantation forest is allowed every 5 years.

Harvesting in Zone 3 (50 to 100 feet, or 50 to 200 feet)

- All timber may be harvested and forest regeneration is allowed, provided that groundcover is established and maintained to provide for diffusion and infiltration of surface runoff.

5. Other Forest Management Activities in the Entire Buffer Rule Zone

Allowed

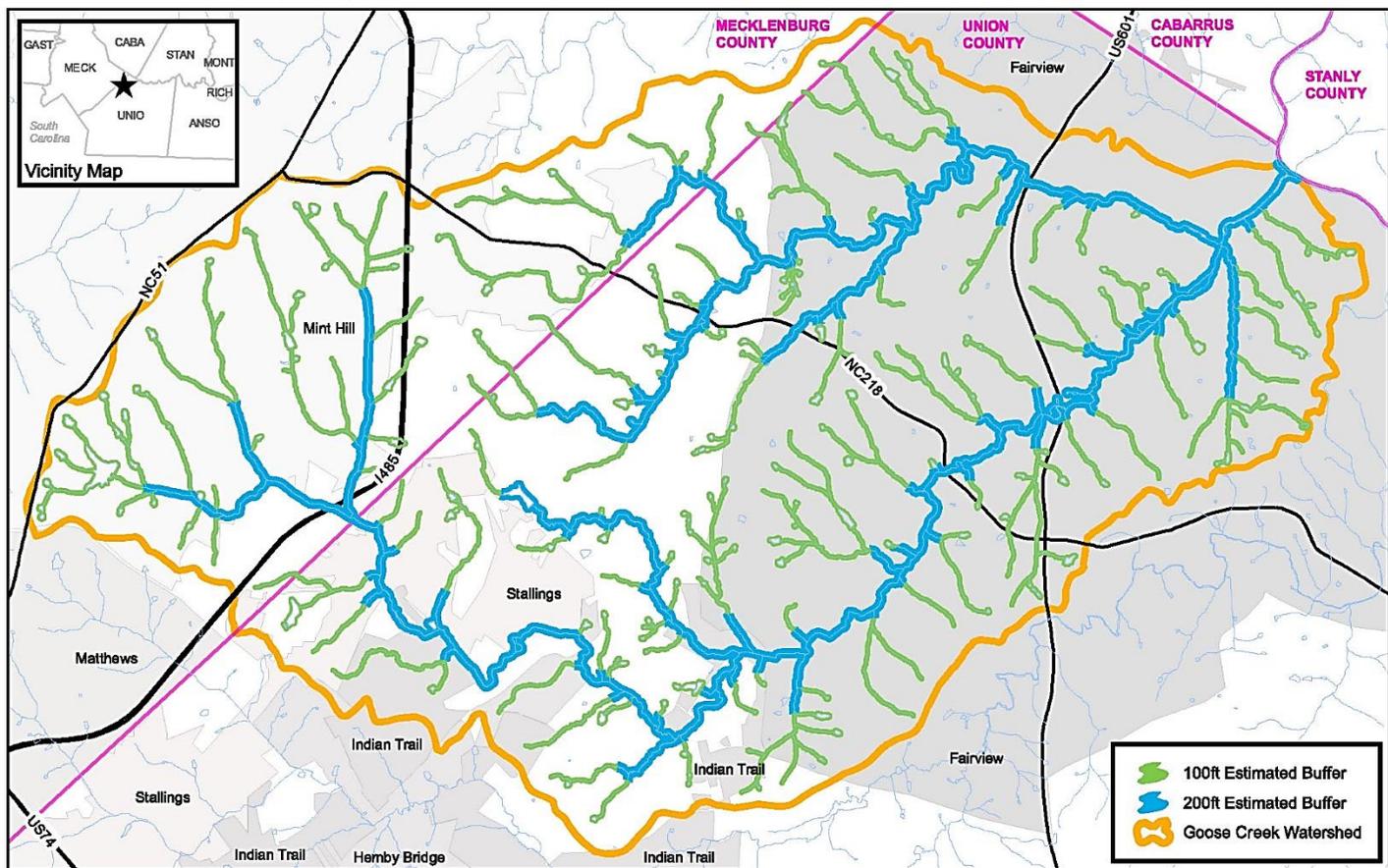
- ✓ Individual trees may be treated to maintain or improve their health, form, or vigor.
- ✓ Removal of individual trees that are in danger of causing damage to structure or human life.
- ✓ Natural regeneration of forest vegetation, and planting of trees, shrubs or ground cover; provided that soil disturbance is minimized.

Allowed with Restrictions

- Harvest of dead or infected trees or application of pesticides as necessary to prevent or control the spread of tree pest and disease infestation. Must be approved by the NCFS, and the NCFS must notify the NC-DWR within 60 days.
- Prescribed burns are allowed when conducted for forest management purposes.
- A one-time fertilizer application at agronomic rates to establish replanted vegetation. No runoff from the fertilizer application is allowed into surface water.

Goose Creek Watershed Estimated Buffers*

Fairview, Hemby Bridge, Indian Trail, Matthews, Mint Hill, Stallings, Mecklenburg County, Union County - North Carolina



Map Source: NCDWQ, Published: 2Feb2009; Municipality Source: NCDOT, Published Jun2007; Hydrography Source: NCDWQ, Published: 29Nov2007
 *On-site determinations by DWQ or delegated local authorities are required for determining locations of streams and buffers. This map does not show all buffers. This map is only as good as the data available when it was printed and is not intended to replace any rule, regulation or classification schedule.

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Prepared by the North Carolina Forest Service, a division of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Steve Troxler, Commissioner.
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