



Logging Roads Must Be Reclaimed To Stop Erosion

Logging roads and landings are essential to timber harvesting. Usually located on dry or moist, well-drained soils, they are shaded by trees left after logging is finished. Bare soil of roads and landings must be reclaimed according to best management practices (BMP) to stop soil erosion and prevent sediment and mud from getting into streams and rivers. Most landings (where logs are loaded onto trucks) are only 1/10 to 1/2 acre in size.

Loggers or landowners must plan on planting grasses, legumes, or shrubs that can grow in these shaded environments. It is always a good first step to get soils tested to determine if the bare soils to be reclaimed need fertilizer or lime.

The second step is to decide what plants will be the best nurse or cover crop to give immediate erosion control. Wheat, oats, and annual rye are common nurse crops. Sorghums, millets, and buckwheat can also be used and will provide excellent food for wildlife. Crimson clover, rape (*Brassica*), and turnips are also good nurse crops.

To survive on most landings and log roads, perennial grasses and legumes need to tolerate shade.

Some mixtures of grasses and legumes seem to work well in West Virginia:

- Orchard grass at 20 pounds per acre and perennial rye grass at 10 pounds per acre
- Creeping red fescue at 30 pounds per acre and perennial rye grass at 20 pounds per acre
- Orchard grass or Kentucky bluegrass at 20 pounds per acre
- Birdfoot trefoil at 10 pounds per acre plus redtop at 5 pounds per acre and orchard grass at 20 pounds per acre
- Deertongue grass at 10 pounds per acre and alsike or ladino clover at 8 pounds per acre

Four native wild rye grasses (Virginia, Canada, riverbank, and hairy) are good perennial grasses for most soils of disturbed areas. Shrubs can also be planted on landings and roads that are not going to be used for travel. Silky dogwood, gray dogwood, arrowwood, and hazelnut are good for moist soils. Black haw and scrub oak are excellent for reclaiming dry sites.

- You should not plant invasive (weedy) grasses, legumes, and shrubs. This list includes sawtooth oak, autumn olive, Tartarian and Amur honeysuckles, crown vetch, and Kentucky 31 fescue. Most Kentucky 31 fescue contains a fungus that causes rabbits to abort their young before they are born and keeps bobwhite quail from reproducing.

Check the following Web sites for more details:

- Appalachian Hardwood Center:
www.ahc.caf.wvu.edu
- WVU Extension Service:
www.wvu.edu/~agexten/wildlife/index
- W.Va. Division of Forestry:
www.wvforestry.com
- Natural Resources Conservation Service:
www.nrcs.usda.gov



Cover crops will give quick erosion control on logging roads.