



Energy, Mines and Resources
Forest Management Branch

918 Alaska Highway
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C
456-3999 Fax 667-3138
www.forestry.gov.yk.ca

FOREST RESOURCES REGULATION

Riparian Management on Streams and Lakes Standards and Guidelines

Under Section 23 of the Forest Resources Regulation, the Forest Management Branch has established management guidelines and standards identifying operating procedures for forest resource harvesting and related activities as described in timber harvest plans, woodlot plans or site plans.

The purpose of these standards and guidelines is to ensure that the management of forest resources occurs in a sustainable manner and with consideration to other values on the land base.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE

- To conserve the integrity of water quality for fisheries, riparian wildlife values, and hydrology through the implementation of riparian management areas for streams and lakes.

STANDARDS TO BE MET DURING HARVESTING OPERATIONS

- Riparian Management Area zone widths for streams and lakes may vary within the ranges specified in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Riparian Management Area (RMA) Slope Distances for Streams

STREAM CLASS	STREAM WIDTH (m)	RESERVE ZONE WIDTH (m)	MANAGEMENT ZONE WIDTH (m)	RMA WIDTH (m)
S1	>20	40-80	60-120	100-200
S2	5 - 20	30-60	50-80	80-140
S3	1.5 - 5	30-40	30-60	60-100
S4	<1.5	20-30	20-70	40-100
S5	Non-Fish streams	5-20	20-30	25-50

Table 2. Riparian Management Area (RMA) Slope Distances for Lakes

LAKE CLASS	SIZE (ha)	RESERVE ZONE WIDTH (m)	MANAGEMENT ZONE WIDTH (m)	RMA WIDTH (m)
L1	>50	40 - 60	80 - 140	120 - 200
L2	>5 - 50	20 - 60	40 - 80	60 - 140
L3	1 - 5	20 - 40	20 - 60	40 - 100

Effective Date: October 11, 2011

- Stream Classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 are all considered fish bearing.
- Stream Class 5 is non-fish bearing of any size.
- Ephemeral draws require 5m machine free zones, directional falling and limited skid crossings.
- Ephemeral draws are not streams and their machine free zones may be reduced during normal winter conditions.
- The outer edge of the ordinary high water mark is considered the edge of the lake for establishing reserves and management zones.
- When width of zones are reduced below Reserve Zone Width a rationale must be developed based on site-specific assessment and will be described in the Timber Harvest Plan or site plan. This rationale must include an explanation of how the RMA prescription will address and mitigate for potential management issues/values described in the RMA objectives.
- Operations in the Management Zone must be conducted in a manner that maintains the integrity of the Reserve Zone; for example, adapted to local aquatic conditions, maintain the riparian function, consider the stream in context to water bodies on the landscape or to enhance both stand stability and stream bank stability.

FURTHER GUIDELINES

- Roads should be located to avoid RMAs except when required for stream crossings.
- Crossings should be located perpendicular to the RMA and must adhere to all road construction standards.
- Water-bodies in Yukon are considered to be fish bearing unless proven otherwise by formal assessment and inventory.
- Zone widths may vary slightly due to terrain and stand structure along ribbon line but overall widths should average that which is prescribed.
- Where specific lakes or specific rivers are identified within the planning process as having importance for example, a key wildlife or recreation area, the RMA should be adjusted to accommodate these values.

DEFINITIONS

Ephemeral draws have seasonal or wet weather flows but are not defined streams, due to lack of bank and stream bed development.

Fish stream: For the purposes of stream classification, fish stream means that portion of a stream that:

- contains fish as outlined in the Yukon Territory Fisheries Regulations at any time of the year; or,
- has a slope gradient of 20% or less and flows directly into a stream frequented by fish or water body known to support fish; and,
- has no access constraints or barriers.

Lake is a naturally occurring static body of water >2 m in depth and >1 ha in size. Size of the lake is determined by the surface area of the lake under normal conditions.

Machine Free Zone is a harvestable zone in which motorized equipment cannot be used.

Management Zone (MZ) is measured from the outer edge of the reserve zone.

Riparian Management Area (RMA) is the Reserve Zone plus the Management Zone.

Reserve Zone (RZ) is the slope distance measured from highwater mark on each side of the stream.

Stream is a watercourse having an alluvial sediment bed, formed when water flows between continual definable banks. Flow in the channel may be perennial, seasonal or intermittent. Streams are classified on the basis of channel width, and the presence of (or ability to contain) fish.