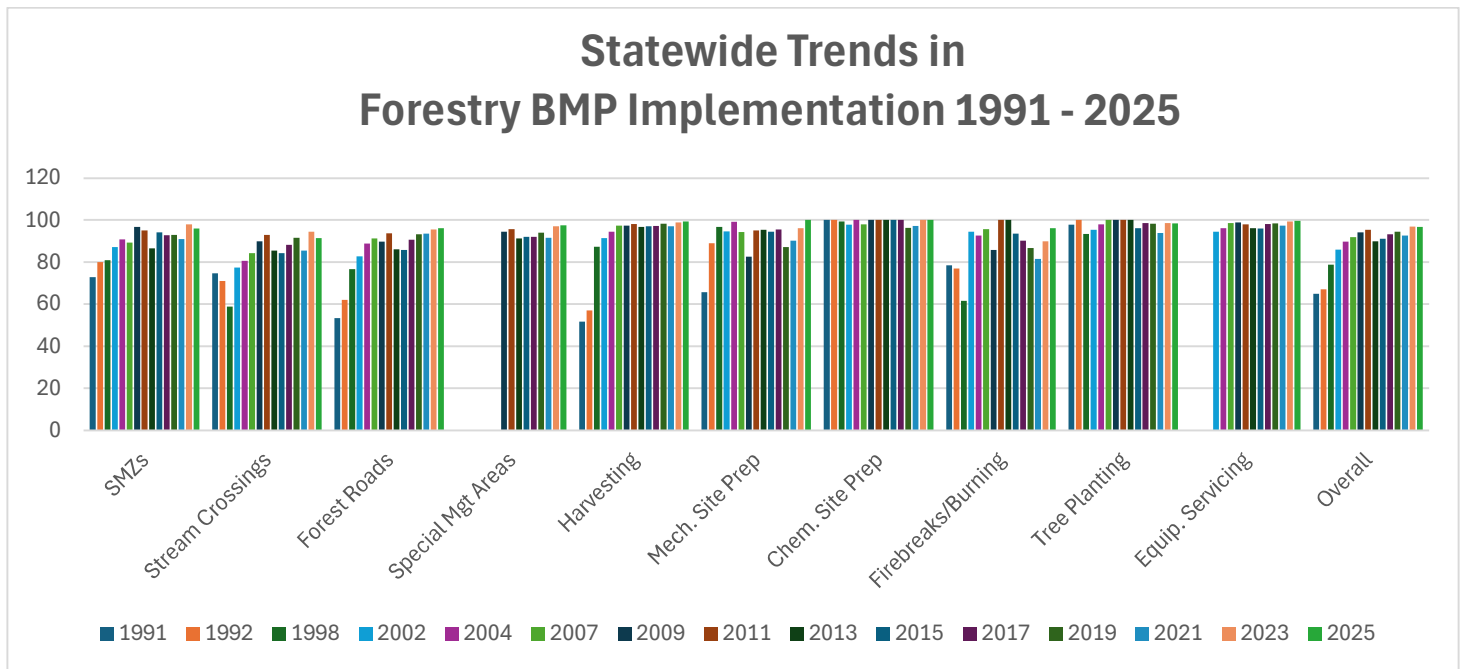




## 2025 Forestry Best Management Practices Implementation Survey Highlights

### General Best Management Practices (BMP) Survey Results

The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) has completed its 2025 Forestry BMP Implementation Survey covering 271 randomly selected sites statewide. These 271 sites consist of 39,924+ acres, which include 260.95 miles of forest roads, 115.78 streams miles, and 171 stream crossings. By ownership, 152 of the sites were on non-industrial private forest land (NIPF), 81 sites were corporate land, and 38 sites were public land. **Overall, statewide BMP implementation for GFC's 2025 BMP Survey is 96.76%, a very good score.** The BMP implementation rate is the percentage of fully implemented BMPs compared to the total number of necessary/applicable BMPs at the tract level, the practice level, and the overall level. This represents just a 0.05 percentage point decline from GFC's 2023 BMP Survey overall score of 96.81%, which was an all-time high. BMP implementation results were also calculated for each applicable category of practice for each tract. Categories of practice include Streamside Management Zones (SMZs), Stream Crossings, Forest Roads, Special Management Areas, Harvesting (outside SMZs), Mechanical Site Prep (MSP), Chemical Site Prep, Firebreaks/Burning, Tree Planting, and Equipment Servicing, as well as an Overall category. BMP implementation results for each category are shown in the chart below, along with the results from the last 14 BMP surveys for comparison where available. BMP implementation for 2025, shown in a darker shade of green on the right side of each category/grouping in the chart, ended up with some scores improving, some staying about the same, and some declining since 2023. The biggest improvements were in the categories of Firebreaks/Burning (up 6.27 points) and MSP (up 3.95 points). Scores for Forest Roads, Timber Harvesting, Chemical Site Prep, Tree Planting, Equipment Servicing, and Special Management Areas, either changed very slightly or stayed the same since 2023. Scores declined some for Stream Crossings (down 3.05 points) and SMZs (down 1.95 points). All categories maintained high scores of at least 91% or better. This is especially good news since the scores from 2021 and 2023 were generally good as well. Note: forest fertilization was known to have occurred on only one single survey site for the 2025 survey. It was a Public site in the Lower Coastal Plain. A total of 78.22 acres were treated with two BMPs assessed on the site with a 100 percent BMP implementation score.



The summary table on page 2 provides a summary of the actual BMP Implementations scores for each category graded for 2023 and 2025, along with the number of actual Water Quality Risks (WQRs) found for each category for 2023 and 2025. Water Quality Risk assessments were made at each site as a component of the Southern Group of State Foresters' BMP monitoring protocol. Water Quality Risks (WQRs) were observed at 68 specific locations on just 20 sites, out of the 271 total survey sites. This indicates that only a small portion of sites contain any WQRs. The total of 68 WQRs is about 2.34 times the number found on the previous BMP survey in 2023. Looking into these numbers a little deeper, it can be seen that 92.62% or 251 of the 271 sites surveyed for 2025 had no WQRs. Overall, it is clear a small percentage of the sites surveyed account for all the WQRs. Additionally, of note is the fact that for the 2025 Survey, 45 of the WQRs found (66.18%) were located on just seven poorly executed sites (just 2.58% of all the sites). For 2025, out of 8833 possible chances where a WQR might have been noted on the survey inspections, only 68 instances were found. This again supports the previously seen fact that on sites where the BMPs are implemented well, there should not be any risk to water quality. Most of the categories have at least some minor room for improvement, as well as continued education. However, the main categories where educational efforts need to concentrate seem to be Stream Crossings, SMZs, and Forest Roads, all due to their instances of actual WQRs found. Timber Harvesting also needs some special attention due to one WQR found for improper stabilization of skid trails, but this category appears to be relatively less problematic.

Our educational efforts will continue to address all categories to maintain good scores. There is always some room for improvement, especially on critical areas where we have seen issues in the past. We plan to concentrate our educational efforts wherever needed. In particular, educational opportunities include:

- Stream Crossings
  - ✓ Minimizing the number of crossings
  - ✓ Stream crossing approach design and stabilization
  - ✓ Proper removal and rehab of temporary crossings
  - ✓ Culvert crossing design, installation, and planning
  - ✓ Basic stream crossing design needs, including storm flow and aquatic migration requirements, as well as not using debris crossings
  - ✓ Temporary portable bridge use
- Streamside Management Zones (SMZs)
  - ✓ Maintaining recommended minimum SMZ widths
  - ✓ Maintaining recommended minimum residual basal area within SMZs and maintaining streambank trees
  - ✓ Keeping logging debris out of stream channels
  - ✓ Proper water diversions and stabilization
  - ✓ Minimizing soil disturbance in SMZs
- Firebreaks/Burning Outside of SMZs
  - ✓ Proper firebreak planning and water diversion installation
  - ✓ Proper tie-in with roads and other sensitive areas such as streams and special management areas
- Forest Roads Outside of SMZs
  - ✓ Proper water diversion installation including number/spacing, design, and placement
  - ✓ Proper closeout needs following harvest activities
- Timber Harvesting Outside of SMZs
  - ✓ Skid trail stabilization requirements
- Mechanical Site Preparation Outside of SMZs
  - ✓ Avoidance of bedding directing surface runoff to roads and road-ditches
- Special Management Areas
  - ✓ Keeping debris out of canals/ditches
  - ✓ Minimizing disturbance and avoiding interference with natural flow in ephemeral areas
  - ✓ Avoidance of direct tie in from road and firebreak diversions into ephemerals and gullies
  - ✓ Using low impact methods for firebreaks
  - ✓ Identifying and preserving the Special Management Area features
- Artificial Regeneration Outside of SMZs
  - ✓ Machine planting on the contour
- Equipment Servicing
  - ✓ Proper disposal of oils, lubricants, containers, and/or trash

<b><u>SUMMARY TABLE</u></b>	<b>2023 IMPLEMENTATION % BMPs Implemented and (# WQRs)</b>	<b>% Point Change from 2023</b>	<b>2025 IMPLEMENTATION % BMPs Implemented and (# WQRs)</b>
<b><u>Practice or Category</u></b>			
Stream Crossings	94.38% (20 WQRs)	- 3.05	91.33% (40 WQRs)
Forest Roads	95.57% (0 WQRs)	+ 0.56	96.13% (10 WQRs)
Timber Harvesting	98.89% (2 WQRs)	+ 0.37	99.26% (1 WQRs)
Mechanical Site Preparation	96.05% (0 WQRs)	+ 3.95	100.00% (0 WQRs)
Chemical Site Preparation	100.00% (0 WQRs)	0	100.00% (0 WQRs)
Firebreaks/Burning	89.83% (0 WQRs)	+ 6.27	96.10% (0 WQRs)
Artificial Regeneration (Tree Planting)	98.59% (1 WQRs)	- 0.15	98.44% (0 WQRs)
Equipment Servicing	99.35% (0 WQRs)	+ 0.28	99.63% (0 WQRs)
Special Management Areas	97.01% (2 WQRs)	+ 0.43	97.44% (0 WQRs)
Forest Fertilization	NA	NA	100.00 (0 WQRs)
Streamside Management Zones (SMZs)	97.98% (4 WQRs)	- 1.95	96.03% (17 WQRs)
<b><u>Weighted Overall Average</u></b>	<b>96.81%</b> (29 WQRs on just 15 of 266 sites) <b>94.36% of all sites had 0 WQRs</b>	- 0.05	<b>96.76%</b> (68 WQRs on just 20 of 271 sites) <b>92.62% of all sites had 0 WQRs</b>

***What's the REALLY GOOD overall news for the 2025 survey?***

The overall BMP Implementation score remains very good at 96.76%, a solid A-grade. This includes some changes for all categories, some positive, some negative. All categories scored about 91% or better. The percentage of stream and road mileages in full compliance was found to be 97.06% and 97.33% respectively. There was a relative increase in WQRs, but the WQRs found were all again concentrated on just a small number of sites, as has been the norm for most of the last 14 to 19 years now. This indicates the vast majority of forestry sites have no WQRs. In conclusion, the overall trend continues to be good at the end of 2025, but continued education and monitoring is still needed to avoid problems and keep things positive. Further details can be found in the full 53-page report on the 2025 Forestry BMP Survey from the GA Forestry Commission.