INFORMATION SHEET 25
Updated: August 2017

Statewide Standards for Timber Harvesting and Related Activities in Shoreland Areas (DEP Towns)

Maine Forest Service, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
22 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333

This information sheet is an overview of Statewide Standards. For specific details consult the actual rules.
http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/policy_management/water_resources/sws/sws.html

What are statewide standards?

Statewide standards for timber harvesting in shoreland areas is a law that applies to water bodies and wetlands in certain organized towns. Statewide Standards apply in only those towns that have chosen to replace their own ordinance for timber harvesting in the shoreland zone town with statewide standards. For information on town ordinances see information sheet #5. For an up to date list of towns where statewide standards apply see: http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/policy_management/water_resources/sws/sws.html.

Where does it apply?

Statewide standards for timber harvesting apply to the following areas:

- within 250 feet of
  - Great Ponds (waterbodies larger than 10 acres)
  - Rivers (downstream of the point where the watershed drains 25 square miles)
  - Tidal waters and coastal wetlands
  - Non-forested freshwater wetlands larger than 10 acres
  - Any size pond or freshwater wetland identified by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as essential wildlife habitat
- within 75 feet of
  - Streams, downstream of the point where the watershed drains 300 acres
- adjacent to
  - Streams above the 300 acre drainage point; and, ponds or freshwater wetlands larger than 4,300 square feet but less than 10 acres that are not identified by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as essential wildlife habitat.

What are the restrictions on timber harvesting and related activities?

Timber harvesting is allowed in shoreland areas covered by statewide standards, though there are restrictions on timber harvest levels, cleared openings, stream crossings, road construction and exposure of mineral soil.

1. In areas with 250' zones
   a. Harvesting of no more than 40 percent of the total volume of trees 4.5 inches DBH or greater in any 10 year period is permitted OR
   b. The residual stand must contain an average basal area of at least 60 square feet per acre of woody vegetation greater than or equal to 1.0 inch DBH, of which 40 square feet per acre must be greater than or equal to 4.5 inches DBH
   c. A well-distributed stand of trees which is windfirm, and other vegetation including existing ground cover, must be maintained;
   d. Within 75 feet, horizontal distance of the normal high water mark there must be no cleared openings. At distances greater than 75 feet, timber harvesting must not create single cleared openings greater than 14,000 square feet. Where openings exceed 10,000 square feet, they must be at least 100 feet apart.
2. In areas with 75' zones
   a. Harvesting of no more than 40 percent of the total volume of trees 4.5 inches DBH or greater in any 10 year period is permitted OR

b. The residual stand must contain an average basal area of at least 60 square feet per acre of woody vegetation greater than or equal to 1.0 inch DBH, of which 40 square feet per acre must be greater than or equal to 4.5 inches DBH

c. A well-distributed stand of trees which is windfirm, and other vegetation including existing ground cover, must be maintained;

d. There must be no cleared openings.

3. Adjacent to streams with watersheds draining less than 300 acres and ponds and non-forested wetlands >4300ft^2 but < 10 acres that are not significant wildlife habitat or essential wildlife habitat.
   a. Shoreline integrity must be protected.

Note: In all zones an alternative method, signed by a licensed forester or certified wildlife biologist may be proposed in an application to the Maine Forest Service (See Option 3 outcome based in MFS Chapter 21 rule.)

4. Slash must not be left within 50' of the normal high water line of Great Ponds, rivers, non-forested wetlands larger than 10 acres, and tidal waters, except slash actively used to protect soil from disturbance by equipment or to stabilize exposed soil. From 50 to 250 feet slash greater than 3" in diameter must be kept below 4' above the ground.
5. Streams may not be used as travel routes (unless frozen and undisturbed).
6. During harvesting shoreline integrity must be protected on all streams and wetlands greater than 4300ft^2.
7. Temporary crossing structures must be removed when the harvest is complete (or a soon a possible after snowmelt) and exposed soil must be stabilized.

Can roads be built in Shoreland Areas?

Roads can be built in shoreland areas but require minimum setbacks. These minimum setbacks increase with slope.

1. 100 feet from the normal high-water line of a Great Pond or a river that flows to a Great Pond, rivers draining more than 25 square miles, nonforested freshwater wetlands 10 acres or larger, any coastal wetland or tidal water, and any pond or freshwater wetland identified by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as significant wildlife habitat or essential wildlife habitat.

2. 50 feet from the normal high water line of streams draining more than 300 acres but above the 25 square mile drainage point.

3. 25 feet from the normal high water line of streams draining less than 300 acres and ponds or freshwater wetlands larger than 4,300 square feet but less than 10 acres not identified by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as significant wildlife habitat or essential wildlife habitat.

Roads and crossings must also:

1. Use a bridge or culvert below the 25mi^2 drainage point, temporary structure are permitted above the 25mi^2 drainage point.
2. Maintain natural stream flow, not block fish passage and not impound water.
3. Stream crossings approaches must divert runoff into vegetated filter strips, not directly into the waterbody.
4. Permanent crossings must be sized to have a capacity of 3X the cross-sectional area of the stream.

What about other land uses?

Timber harvesting does not include clearing land for development. These activities fall under a separate set of rules.

Where can I get more information or assistance with statewide standards?

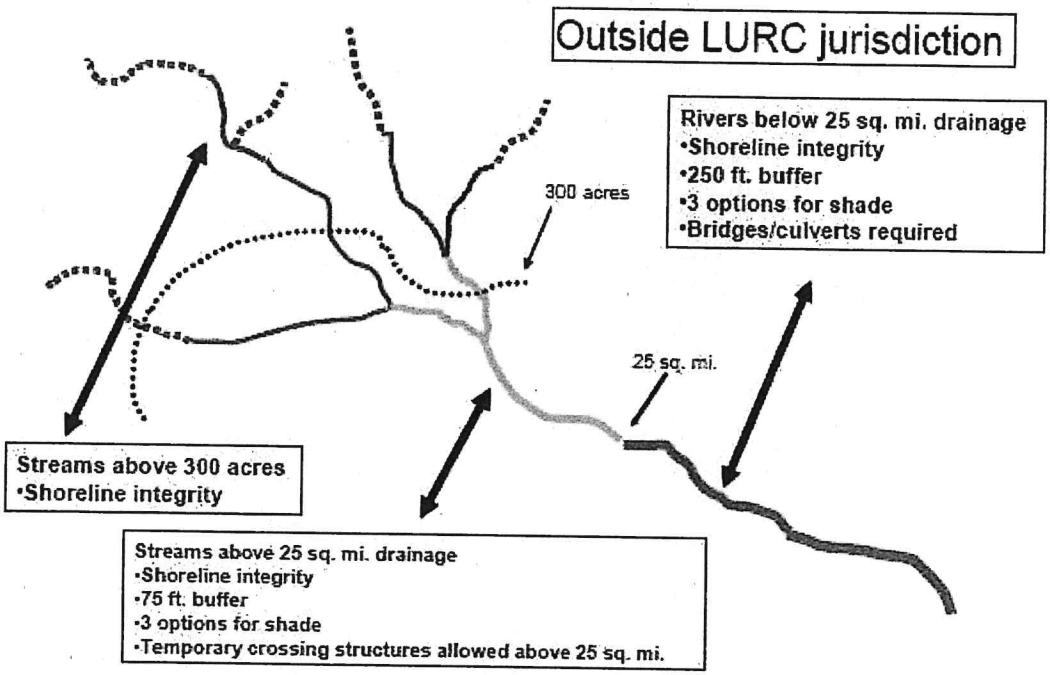
Information, including maps of where statewide standards apply and a copy of the actual rule can be found on the Maine Forest Service website: http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/policy_management/water_resources/sws/sws.html.
You can also contact the Maine Forest Service directly with questions.

For more information, please contact:
Maine Forest Service
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
22 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0022
(207) 287-2791 or
1-800-367-0223
forestinfo@maine.gov

Be Woods Wise!
Practical advice for your land and trees from the Maine Forest Service.

www.maineforestservice.gov

Statewide Standards for Timber Harvesting in Shoreland Areas



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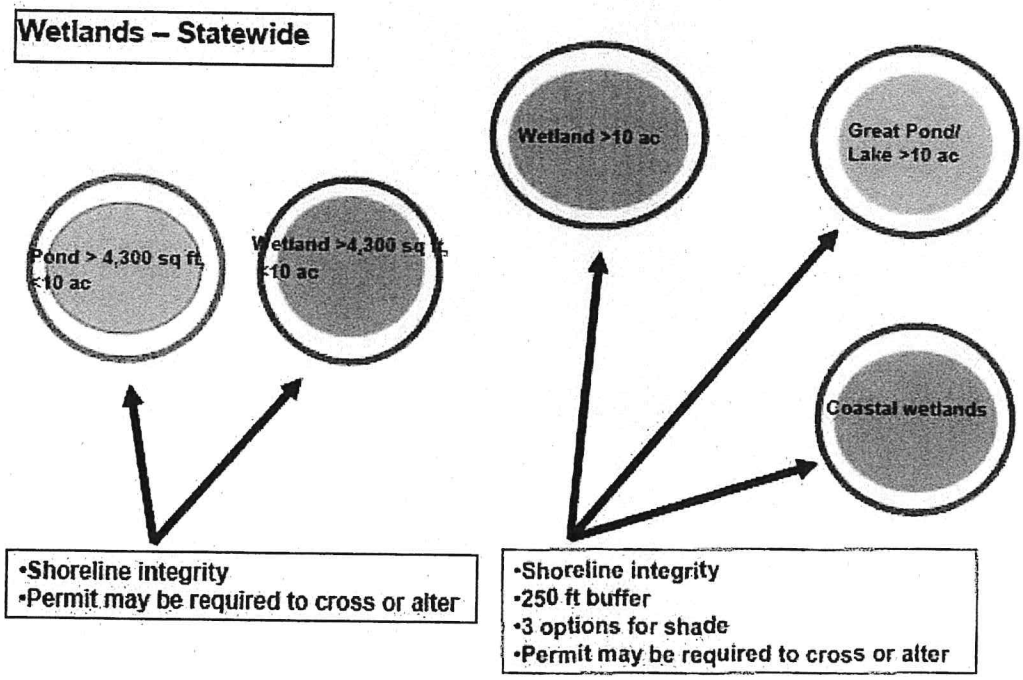

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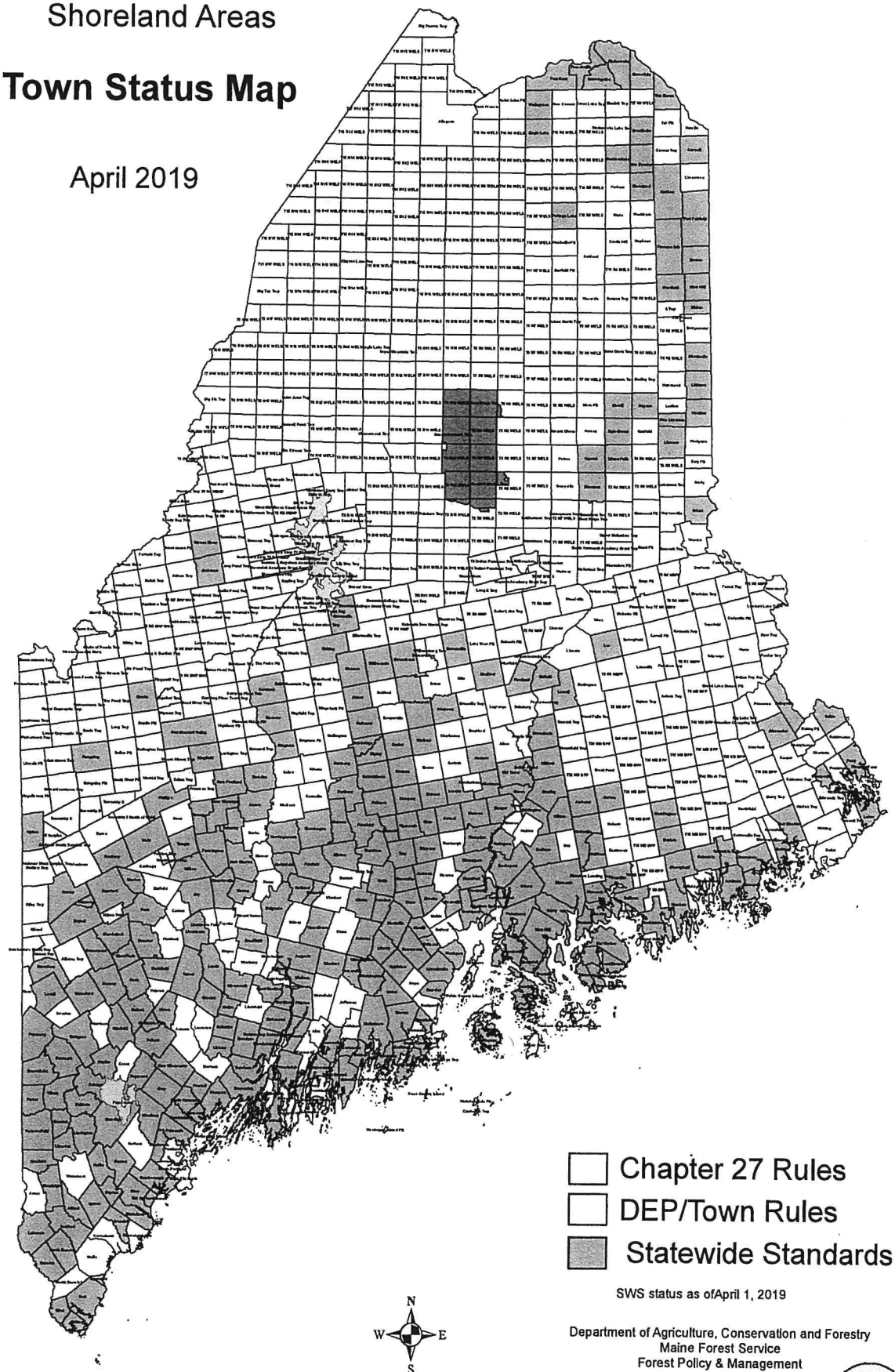
Diagrams are for informational purposes only – incase of discrepancy the written rule shall govern

Statewide Standards for Timber Harvesting in the Shoreland Areas

Town Status Map

April 2019



Chapter 27 Rules

DEP/Town Rules

Statewide Standards

SWS status as ofApril 1, 2019

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Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Maine Forest Service
Forest Policy & Management

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