

Since the "shade rule" was implemented in 2014, it has proven, for owners of smaller parcels of forest land, difficult and costly to implement. It's difficult in that it requires specialized knowledge and costly in that we must, for the most part, hire that knowledge. Simply put, I cannot personally set up a stream side harvest without hiring a consultant. In a market that is marginally profitable at best, this extra cost is often making the difference in managing or not managing our riparian areas. It means doing what is right for the land is sometimes being sacrificed to what we can afford. It also means that sometimes we are sacrificing the art of forest management on the altar of basal area.

Family forest owners supported the implementation of the shade rule in 2014 with the promise that research as to the effectiveness of the rule would be timely accomplished and shared. We have attended most, if not all of the FPAAC meetings, but to date, 5 years later, we have seen no research results. We have no idea if the sacrifices we have made are making a difference. Harder still to swallow is that, even should the research show that the rule "works", we will never know, unless further study is implemented, if a more flexible rule, one taking stream width, aspect, direction of flow, brush and deciduous cover and other factors into consideration, might work just as well.

None of us are interested in denuding our streams, nor do we think there should be no riparian management rules. We are, however, finding this rule a disincentive to good forest management. When forest management becomes too onerous, the result will be growing houses instead of growing trees, and then where will the fish be.

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