

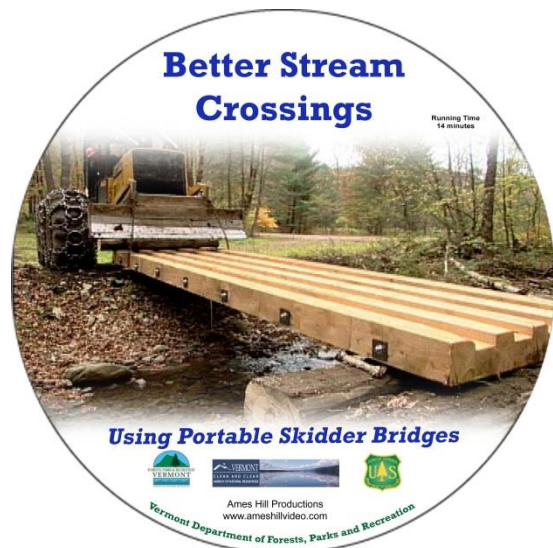
H586

Vermont's Portable Skidder Bridge Initiative

The goals of this initiative are threefold:

1. Inform loggers, landowners and foresters about the benefits of using portable skidder bridges through workshops and presentations, field demonstrations, informational brochures, static displays, video and web production, and news articles.
2. Provide portable skidder bridges to loggers for purchase, loan and rental using a variety of means and partners.
3. Provide assistance and support for existing and start-up businesses that would fabricate and sell portable skidder bridges.

Portable skidder bridges are designed and intended for use as temporary structures for crossing streams during logging. Portable skidder bridges are becoming widely viewed as a Best Management Practice for controlling nonpoint source pollution associated with timber harvesting operations. When properly installed, used, and removed, they create less stream bank and stream bed disturbance as compared to other alternatives such as culverts or poled fords. They are also economical since they are reusable, easy to install and can be transported from job to job. Portable skidder bridges will reduce the potential for sedimentation, channeling, and degradation of aquatic habitat to occur while allowing loggers to harvest timber in compliance with Acceptable Management Practices (AMPs) for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont.



Portable Skidder Bridge Rental Program

The Portable Skidder Bridge Rental Program was started in 2007 with two pilot projects getting underway in Lamoille and Rutland counties. Loggers can rent portable skidder bridges from Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Districts offering this program for \$100 a month. Ten districts now offer this rental option. Bridges are located at participating sawmills and log yards for loggers to conveniently pick up and return. Loggers who rent bridges are provided an educational packet that illustrates guidelines to follow for installation, use and removal of the bridges while following *Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont*.

Rental Program Accomplishments

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of Conservation Districts offering a rental option	2	5	5	9	9	10
Number of portable skidder bridges in the rental pool	6	14	15	23	24	19
Number of bridges rented	7	11	14	18	25	26

AMP Program

The AMPs were developed and adopted as rules to implement Vermont's water quality statutes, and became effective on August 15, 1987. The AMPs are designed to prevent sediment, petroleum products, and logging slash from entering waters of the state. They are also meant to reduce the potential for soil erosion and minimize stream temperature fluctuations. Since adoption of the AMPs, the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FP&R) has worked with representatives from the Vermont forest industry to support the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Compliance and Enforcement Division in an effort to reduce the number and severity of water quality violations resulting from timber harvesting operations.

Year	Number of AMP Technical Assists
2008	61
2009	60
2010	60
2011	73
2012	49
2013	57

Statement of Need: Enhance program delivery and technical assistance provided to forest landowners and loggers to reduce the risk of non-point source pollution on timber harvesting operations.

Resources Needed:

(2) FTE's (\$200,000)

- Provide technical assistance to loggers using portable skidder bridges through the Rental Program to ensure that bridges are installed and used properly to protect water quality.
- Enhance AMP compliance monitoring
- Facilitate AMP training, education and outreach for loggers, landowners and consulting foresters

Capital Improvement (\$40,000)

- Construct 10 new bridges to augment the rental pool supply

Total Amount Requested: \$240,000