



## Atlantic Salmon Federation

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# ASF's Land Use Policy

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## Introduction:

All land use activity within a watershed, no matter how far located from a watercourse\*, has potential to adversely affect the quality of the aquatic ecosystem, including the well being of wild Atlantic salmon. The following policy has been adopted and is being advanced by ASF in the context of our mission to protect and preserve the existence of the wild Atlantic salmon and its critical freshwater habitat in rivers throughout the spawning range in North America.

Watercourses may become injured through contamination from chemicals, sediment, and other materials, or through elevated water temperatures and unnatural fluctuation in temperature or water flow. Any of these factors can result in significant degradation or destruction of habitat for wild Atlantic salmon and other freshwater fish species. Any reduction in the number and diversity of living organisms is a great loss to the environment, and can also cause injury to the recreational fishery.

The diverse uses of land must be managed in the interests of conservation and bio-diversity. All land use activities should be environmentally sustainable in a manner that guarantees the long-term health of the watershed ecosystem and its natural inhabitants. We can achieve this goal by promoting adoption of effective legislation and government policies, and industry practices that establish environmentally sustainable land use management within our watersheds.

Note: This policy statement is intended to address land use impacts by, but not limited to, the following sectors: forestry; agriculture; mining; rural and urban development; and watercourse crossings of any kind (eg. power transmission, pipeline and transportation crossings). Most adverse impacts on watercourse habitat resulting from poor environmental practices are the same, irrespective of the land use sector. Where, however, an individual sector poses a distinct issue, specific policy statements are provided.

\* "watercourse" means a natural body of flowing or standing water or an area occupied by water during part of the year, but does not include groundwater.

## **Policy:**

ASF, therefore, adopts the following as policy:

1. ASF advocates the protection of watercourses through the adoption of environmentally sustainable land use practices that contribute to eliminating adverse impacts on watercourses, such as soil erosion, chemical contamination, elevated water temperatures, unnatural fluctuation or changes in water flow, illegal operation of vehicles, and any other injury resulting from human activity.
2. ASF advocates that governments enforce fisheries and environmental legislation and implement appropriate, mandatory and auditable mitigation and restorative measures where injury to watercourses has resulted from environmentally unsustainable land use practices. Where legislative or regulatory provisions do not exist, ASF will advocate their adoption.
3. ASF advocates the implementation of mandatory setbacks (riparian buffer zone) of sufficient width to provide adequate protection to watercourses on a site-specific basis. Any activity permitted within the setback should not detract from the ability of the buffer to protect the watercourse.
4. ASF advocates that governments initiate and implement integrated community watershed management processes, involving all stakeholders, as the best way to plan and manage activities within the watershed and to establish environmentally sustainable management of all land uses.

## **Industry Specific Policy Matters:**

### Forestry:

5. ASF advocates that the forest products industry and governments adopt best forestry management practices (BMPs) and certification programs, with third party audit, that contribute to elimination of the adverse impacts on aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems, including fish habitat and fish populations, due to habitat loss or degradation, unnatural rate of water flow, elevated water temperature, and other causes of injury.
6. ASF advocates that governments and the forest industry leave adequate amounts of representative forest structure across the landscape to ensure maximum habitat protection and to help maintain the natural state of salmon habitat and the economic benefits derived from salmon fishing.
7. ASF advocates that transportation systems that minimize road, culvert and bridge construction on forestlands, through good planning. Where roads and bridges are necessary, they should be designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with procedures that ensure protection of the aquatic ecosystem, and fish populations. Roads on forestlands should be located as far from watercourses as possible to reduce access to fisheries resources. Where roads and bridges are no longer needed, they should be de-commissioned.
8. ASF advocates that the forest products industry develop and adopt environmentally sustainable, non-chemical management control methods.

### Agriculture:

9. ASF advocates that the agriculture industry and governments adopt best management practices (BMPs) and certification programs, with third party audit, that contribute to elimination of the adverse impacts on biodiversity and the aquatic ecosystem, including fish habitat and fish populations, due to habitat loss or degradation, unnatural rate of water flow and elevated water temperature, nutrient enrichment and other causes of injury.
10. ASF advocates the mandatory exclusion of all livestock from watercourses and from the designated setback (riparian buffer zone).
11. ASF advocates that the agriculture industry develop and adopt environmentally sustainable, non-chemical management control methods.
12. ASF advocates effective regulation of withdrawal of water from watercourses and groundwater for irrigation purposes to prevent adverse impacts on aquatic habitat.

### Resource Extraction:

13. ASF advocates that the resource extraction industry (mining, peat moss harvesting) and governments adopt best management practices (BMPs) and certification programs, with third party audit, that contribute to elimination of the adverse impacts on biodiversity and the aquatic ecosystem, including fish habitat and fish populations, due to habitat loss or degradation, and other causes of injury.

### Rural and Urban Development:

14. ASF advocates that governments (federal, provincial/state, or municipal) adopt rural and urban development regulations that contribute to elimination of the adverse impacts on biodiversity and the aquatic ecosystem, including fish habitat and fish populations, due to habitat loss or degradation, unnatural rate of water flow and elevated water temperature, and other causes of injury.
15. ASF advocates elimination of all forms of injury to watercourses due to waste disposal facilities.

### Watercourse crossings (Linear Development):

16. ASF advocates that governments (federal, provincial/state, or municipal) adopt appropriate regulations respecting watercourse crossings (linear development: power transmission lines, pipelines and bridges, culverts or causeways) that contribute to elimination of the adverse impacts on biodiversity and the aquatic ecosystem, including fish habitat and fish populations, and other causes of injury.