
Wisconsin Biology Technical Note 6

Tree Drops for Fish Habitat

Companion Document to NRCS FOTG Standard 644, Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management

Tree drops involve the placement of coarse woody debris into the water of a lake or flowage along the shoreline to create or enhance natural reproduction and provide cover for fish.

- The tree drop may be placed and maintained only by a riparian, and shall be placed entirely within the riparian's zone of interest.
- The tree drop must be placed solely for the purpose of fish habitat.
- A deposit of sand, gravel, or stone may be associated with the placement of a tree drop provided the deposit is limited to the area immediately underneath or within one foot of the structure and is less than two cubic yards.
- Dredging is not allowed for the placement of a tree drop.
- Tree drops may only be placed in lakes or flowages.
- Tree drops shall use live trees having a minimum diameter of 12 inches at the base.
- Tree drops shall be securely anchored to the shore at intervals no less than 50 feet apart.
- The tree drop may consist of one or more trees at each site.
- Proper erosion control measures shall be used during installation, removed after work is complete, and any disturbed areas restored.
- To protect fish habitat during spawning seasons, the tree drop may not be placed during the following time periods:
 - a) For waters South of Hwy 29, March 15 through May 15.
 - b) For waters North of Hwy 29, April 1 through June 1.
- On waters that require permits, all State and Local regulations will be followed.

Note: Local zoning ordinances may place restrictions on cutting trees in the shore land zone. The riparian is responsible for ensuring that their tree drop project is in compliance with any local zoning requirements.
- As a minimum, the construction plan will include all of the data required for a tree drop general permit. The requirements are located on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website (<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us>).