



Do I need a permit to remove wood debris?

Landowners can do the following to clean and open a channel without obtaining a permit:

- Fallen trees may be pulled from a stream by vehicle or motorized equipment from **top of streambanks** using winches, chains or cables.
- Handheld tools like chainsaws, axes and handsaws may be used to cut debris in the waterway into smaller pieces.
- Downed trees still attached to streambanks can be cut to the stump. Do not remove the stumps. They keep streambanks from eroding.
- All trees and brush removed from the waterway must be removed from the floodplain.

A permit is required if the work:

- Will disturb the stream bed or bank.
- Requires the use of machinery like excavators or backhoes in the stream channel or **below the top** of the stream bank.
- Is in a stream with endangered species.

Who We Are

About Us

The West Virginia Conservation Agency is the state government agency responsible for promoting and protecting land, water and soil resources. It provides assistance to the state's 14 conservation districts and is overseen by the State Conservation Committee.

Contact Us

Phone: 304.558.2204

Web: www.wvca.us



Other Key Contacts

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
304.636.6586

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh office:
412.395.7155

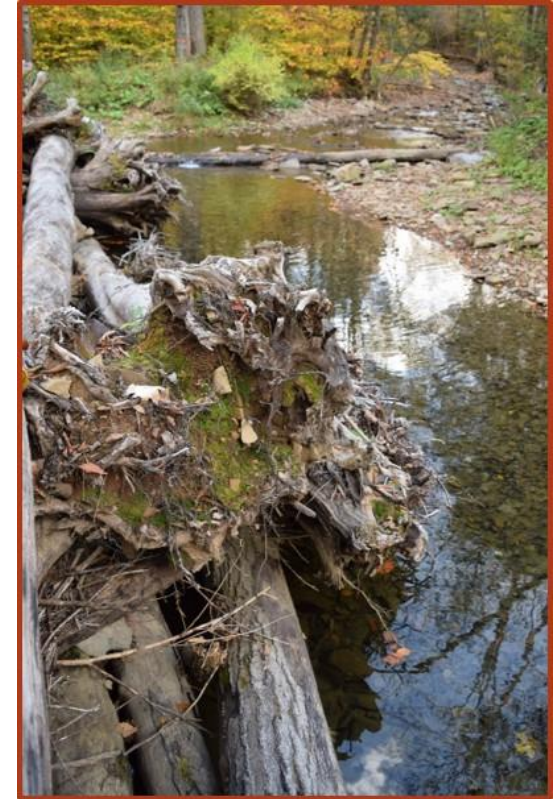
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Huntington office:
304.399.5710

WV Division of Natural Resources Office of Land and Streams:
304.558.3225



West Virginia
Conservation Agency

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REMOVAL OF WOOD DEBRIS

Your questions answered



West Virginia
Conservation Agency



About 78 percent of West Virginia is forested

All of those trees mean plenty of wood debris...

West Virginia is the third most forested state in the nation. Only Maine and New Hampshire have more forest cover. With nearly 27,000 miles of waterways, West Virginia's rivers and streams often become blocked by fallen trees and branches.

This fact sheet will help West Virginians understand which blockages are bad, and what to do about problem blockages on their land.

Some debris can simply be left alone...

In general, wood debris that does not pose a threat to bridges, houses or other property does not need to be removed.

Not all wood debris is a problem! Trees, branches and stumps can play an important role in a waterway's ecosystem.

It can be a good thing.

Debris lodged in banks can provide an aquatic habitat, reduce stream flow velocity and in some cases, reduce the potential for downstream flooding.



Significant Blockages

Although many blockages pose no threat, others are more severe.

When wood debris causes a significant blockage that restricts stream flow, blocks bridge and culvert openings, diverts a stream's flow causing bank erosion, or threatens public or private property, it should be removed.

The West Virginia Conservation Agency can provide technical assistance and oversight to landowners who wish to remove stream blockages from their property.

To report a blockage, call 1-866-UC-Flood (823-5663)