



## Some Considerations

- A permit review process considers safety, stability and navigational issues to determine whether there is a net benefit to the water resource to leave or remove fallen trees and branches.
- If the tree becomes an obstruction to navigation or causes flooding on neighboring properties, then a municipality or the riparian landowner can remove the tree to alleviate the damage.
- Local river groups looking to remove material for navigation will have to get approval from the riparian landowner to cut a path or remove obstructions since the streambed and its obstructions are owned by the riparian landowner.

*If you have questions about your specific circumstances, contact the DNR Water Management Hotline at 920-662-5452 and ask to be connected to the water management specialist serving the county where the obstruction occurs.*



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## Paddling among Fish & Wildlife

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**Fallen logs and branches provide shelter for fish and wildlife, shade to keep water temperatures cool, basking areas for turtles and surfaces upon which tiny food organisms cling.**

Sometimes this fallen material can create an obstruction to navigation. Before removing such obstructions, there are important ecological and legal points to consider, as outlined in this brochure.

Whenever possible, tree falls should remain as part of this natural, ever-changing environment.

## Who needs a permit and under what circumstances?

### Permit Not Required

Trees and branches that fall due to a natural process may be cut and pulled away from the waterway and floodplain by the affected riparian\* or by another person who has that riparian's approval.

### Permit Required

- If the removal of the obstruction would result in the removal of more than two cubic yards of bottom sediment or disrupt bank stability, then a dredging permit will be needed from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
- Approval from the DNR is required to operate heavy equipment on the bed of a navigable waterway.
- A permit is needed to use trees, logs or branches that were cut by people for the purposes of creating fish or wildlife habitat structures.

### Removal Required

Legal standards require that if a riparian property owner cuts a tree (or other vegetation) and it falls into the water, that cut vegetation must be removed unless the riparian has a permit to leave it in the water, as noted earlier.

### Removal Not Required

If a tree falls due to natural processes, there is no requirement that the landowner remove the tree. On rivers, recreational users do not have to keep their feet wet; they may portage around obstructions to navigate, using the shortest route possible.

*\*Riparian One who owns shoreland property, be it a stream, river, or lake.*