

Hurricane Helene recovery

Best Practices for residential work around creeks, streams & rivers

As Virginia rebuilds following impacts from Hurricane Helene, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) wants to share important information and best practices for working in, near, or around creeks, streams, rivers, or lakes. **Remember: Safety first!**

Stream Crossings

- If possible, use existing crossings (bridge or culvert).
- If there's no access, a temporary crossing may be installed as long as it is removed once cleanup work is complete. If installing a temporary crossing, it is recommended you consult with a Virginia-licensed engineer and contact DEQ*.
- If you plan to build a permanent crossing, it is recommended you consult with a Virginia-licensed engineer and contact DEQ*, as a permit may be required.
- If you need to cross a waterbody and can't use or build any kind of crossing, try to cross in areas with gently sloping banks and a rocky creek/riverbed. If it is necessary to improve a crossing with stream bank grading and placement of stone, please consult a Virginia-licensed engineer and contact DEQ*, as a permit may be required.
- Do not make waterbodies any deeper or wider than they were before storm impacts.

Debris Removal

- It is allowable to remove debris from waterways to protect property and reestablish pre-flood flow paths.
- If using heavy equipment, the equipment should be operated from stream banks when possible.
- Care should be taken to prevent fuel or equipment fluid from getting into waterways.
- Do not dispose of debris within the waterways.
- Do not berm material along the banks of the waterways.
- Do not make waterbodies any deeper or wider than they were before storm impacts.

Stabilizing Stream Banks

- A Virginia-licensed engineer should be consulted and DEQ* should be contacted prior to undertaking stream bank stabilization projects – permits may be required, and if not designed and constructed properly, such projects could result in unnecessary damage to neighboring properties.

Reseeding After Work Completion

- Upon completion of restoration work, areas with bare soil should be reseeded as soon as possible to limit erosion.

*For more information, contact David Nishida at (276) 698-7680 or david.nishida@deq.virginia.gov.