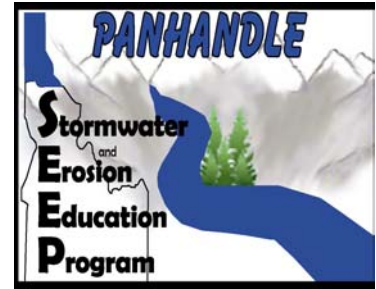


Exclusive to: NIBCA's *Dimensions*
September 23, 2008
Word count: 578
Submitted by Kate Wilson of the SEEP Committee



BMP of the Month (OCTOBER): The importance of properly “buttoning up” your site for winter

Fall is here and winter is fast approaching. Working outside on a snowy day can be considered by many to be a little miserable. Just imagine the soil that can trickle, ooze, or even gush from your site during the winter onto adjacent properties, public roads, sensitive areas, wildlife habitat, and our lakes, rivers, and streams; it makes *all* kinds of living things miserable. In addition to protecting resources and friendly relationships with your neighbors, buttoning up your site for the winter is probably the best thing for your project.

In order to reduce the amount and duration of soil exposed to erosion by wind, rain, runoff, snow, and vehicle tracking, scheduling is of the utmost importance. The folks at SEEP (the Stormwater and Erosion Education Program) recommend avoiding or minimizing any land-disturbing activities between the months of October-June. In North Idaho, the ideal grading period is during the summer months. If you must continue grading during the rainy season, the length of time that the soil is exposed (as well as the total area exposed) must be minimized to keep the soil on your site. If possible, the best thing you can do during the winter and spring is to stay out of the site entirely.

“I can’t emphasize enough the importance of staying out [of the site] all winter,” says Kenny Hicks of K.E. Hicks and Associates out of Osburn, ID. “If you can stay out and let it melt slowly, with no tracks, you will reduce moving sediment.”

For buttoning up sites, Hicks recommends that all contractors and builders:

- 1) Check all of the perimeter lines for possible run-on (and runoff).
- 2) It may be necessary to refresh the rock construction entrance (you’ll be glad in the early spring).
- 3) Check all of the drain ditches (both temporary and permanent) and dams (remove excessive sediment).
- 4) Keep a couple bails of straw and wattles available in case they are needed before the rain turns to snow.
- 5) After the snow begins to fall, try to stay out of the site. If you stay out and let the snow melt naturally in the spring you will decrease the movement of sediment. Remember: wheel tracks in the snow on sloppy ground become the first rill erosion (when shallow sheets of water start to gather in low spots on the surface of the land) in the spring.
- 6) If working large sites, make sure there is a catch basin at all low areas for water retention/detention.
- 7) Review the summers Erosion & Sediment Control (ESC) Plan inspection sheets; identify and reevaluate all problem-areas listed.

- 8) Check all new revegetated areas for healthy growth. Cover any bare or thin areas with mulch or straw.

Precipitation characteristics such as frequency, intensity, and duration directly affect the amount of runoff and the potential for erosion at a site. Knowing the site's general climate patterns will help you decide how to time the phases of construction to avoid situations that would cause the most erosion. If possible, get your permanent vegetation and stormwater measures in *before* Mr. Clause comes to town and tracks mud all over the freshly fallen snow; save yourself a mess.

"I try to never clear and grub more than I can stabilize, protect or capture in one construction season," advises Hicks. "Remember, if you loose all your topsoil (sediment) you are going to have a tough time revegetating the site."

For more information on SEEP, please see: <http://www.plrcd.org/SEEP>.