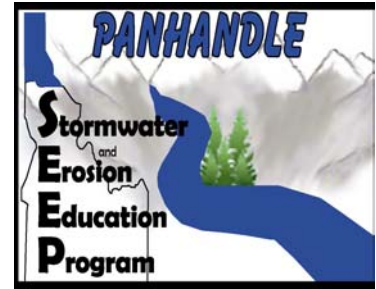


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## **BMP of the Month (SEPTEMBER): The importance of seeding/revegetating**

Vegetation is the most important factor in preventing erosion; the more bare and exposed soils there are on your site, the lesser the likelihood of keeping those soils in place at your site. Plants, trees, and grasses also lessen the impact of raindrops and slow down/ absorb stormwater runoff. Whenever possible, leave the vegetation present at your site alone. This practice applies to all types of sites.

“The Earth’s skin is her topsoil, and when we grade, we remove the protection that vegetation provides,” says local landscape architect Tom Freeman. “Reseed, replant, help protect that skin and avoid the problems raw soil can cause.”

Where vegetation does need to be temporarily removed for a project, it is important to replace it as soon as possible. The areas where vegetation is to be preserved need to be identified in the plans and marked on the field before any site disturbance begins.

Some disturbed sites will require the placement of topsoil (or other suitable plant growth material) to provide suitable soils for bringing back your vegetation. Topsoiling may involve bringing in soils from off-site or merely replacing any fertile topsoil that was stripped and stockpiled during earlier site development. This practice is recommended for slopes with a gradient of 2:1 or anywhere that the native soil is unsuitable for plants.

Grass can be established by seeding or sodding. Seeding is generally preferred because of the lower cost and greater selection of grass species. Sod can be an option, depending on the site—graded or cleared that have a high chance of eroding or where a permanent long-lived plant cover is needed immediately. Planting is the preferred method of revegetation for the following sites:

- Any finished slope that will remain undisturbed for at least 10 years
- Extremely rocky slopes or sites
- Roads or material source sites that have been abandoned
- All types of landscaping, including urban thoroughfares and interchanges, and residential streets where aesthetics are more of a factor
- Any wetland and wildlife habitat areas where it may be critical to plant the desired species initially so that the site is not overrun by weeds or undesirable species that detract from the intended use/function of the site

If your site is near a stream, wetland, river, or lake, protecting and/or reestablishing vegetation becomes even more paramount; vegetated buffer strips along water (or

running into a storm sewer or other conveyance) help protect water quality by limiting the sediment and runoff from upland sites. These strips act as living sediment filters.

Steep fines and stop-work orders may be levied if your site is found to pollute surface water; it is a violation of the Federal Clean Water Act. Beyond fines though, your site will also look a lot better to your clients and even passerby with vegetation instead of just bare soils. Replanting disturbed sites also provides an opportunity to be selective and choose species that fit the area and the function of the site; it is a great way to ensure that invasive species will not overtake your site.

“Reestablishing vegetation helps minimize the potential negative impacts that are caused by erosion and the inevitable sedimentation that follows,” says Freeman. “Having vegetation cover your site will slow the erosion process and help sell your project.”

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