

# WATER - our MOUNTAIN GOLD

## EROSION & SEDIMENT CONTROL

From the Central Sierra Watershed Committee

*“A fifty pound bag of grass seed does more to control erosion than fifty bags of cement”*

Hugh Hammond Bennett, the father of soil conservation

### PROBLEM

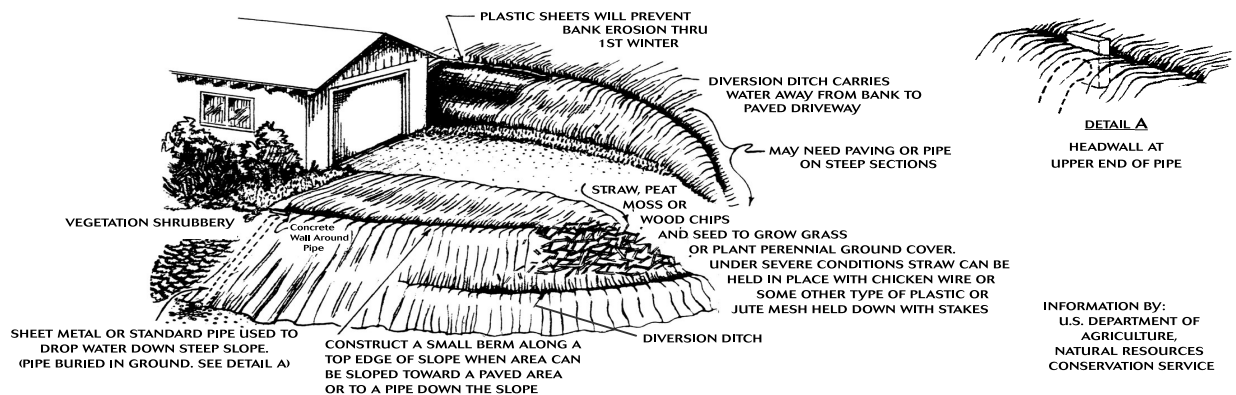
- Local water quality and quantity is being impaired by increasing amounts of sediment in seasonal creeks, streams, and rivers. Fact: sediment is the *leading* pollutant in our nation's surface waters.
- This may be caused by ground disturbance during grading on construction sites, use of mechanical/heavy equipment on slopes, lack of or improperly sized culverts, inadequate gutters and drainage, improperly installed driveways and access roads, or any other activity that disturbs the soil and is not properly treated prior to the rainy season.

### TREATMENT \*

For specific technical assistance at no cost, contact the Coarsegold Resource Conservation District at 559.674.2108 extension 3, or the Mariposa County Resource Conservation District 209.966.3431.

- Protect cut-and-fill slopes with stabilizing material including vegetation, fiber cloth, straw, riprap (large rocks), gabions (wire baskets filled with rocks), retaining walls, or similar stabilizing materials.
- Install culverts according to local, regional, and state code standards.
- Manage vegetation on all riparian areas and/or disturbed areas.
- Seed exposed areas with native vegetation.
- Divert water from driveways and pathways to prevent gully erosion. Water bars may be used where appropriate.
- Minimize soil surface disturbance. Keep natural vegetation as much as possible.
- Do not remove naturally fallen pine needles and leaves from the ground surface, if possible.
- Clean and/or remove undesirable or person-caused debris from riparian areas.
- Avoid mechanical/machinery use on slopes greater than 30% whenever possible.
- Most importantly, re-vegetate all bare or disturbed soil with grass seed and straw mulch (be sure straw is certified weed free to prevent the introduction of noxious weeds). The optimum time to accomplish this is between October 15 and November 15.
- Install and maintain a sediment basin or trap to prevent sediments from leaving the site or property

### EXAMPLES FOR EROSION CONTROL on NEWLY RESHAPED SOILS SCHEMATIC DRAWING OF EROSION CONTROL PRACTICES



\*Information from the Coarsegold Resource Conservation District's "Voluntary Water Quality, Grazing Land, Oak Woodland Conservation Management Guidelines – Madera County 1997" and the Natural Resources Conservation Services. Additional information is available at [www.crcd.org](http://www.crcd.org).

**MORE INFORMATION:** Before grading please contact Madera County Engineering Department at 559.675.7817 or Mariposa Building Department 209.966.3934. For additional assistance contact USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services: Madera Office –559.674.2108 extension #3 or Mariposa Office 209.966.3431.

The CSWC meets on the last Wednesday of every month at the Sierra Ambulance Office, 9 AM, and is open to the public. For information please email [leavesofgrass@netptc.net](mailto:leavesofgrass@netptc.net).

*The mission of the Central Sierra Watershed Committee is to promote the quality, quantity, and aesthetic values of our water resources through the conservation and restoration of our watersheds.*

CSWC members include: Interested citizens, ranchers, homeowners; local Native American tribes; North Fork Community Development Council; Chowchilla-Redtop, and Coarsegold Resource Conservation Districts; Chowchilla City Council; Upper Merced Watershed Council; California Water Institute; Sierra Foothill Conservancy; Madera Irrigation District; Yosemite Sequoia Resource Conservation & Development Council; US Army Corps of Engineers; Regional Water Quality Control Board; Madera County Environmental Health & Engineering; San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, Natural Resource Conservation Service; and the United States Forest Service.

Note: The contents of this article do not necessarily reflect the views of the State.