

FALL VEGETATIVE COVER STABILIZATION FOR EROSION CONTROL

The Huntingdon County Conservation District wants to remind anyone conducting earthmoving activities that **NOW** is the prime time to establish cool season grass cover on those disturbed areas. According to the *Penn State Agronomy Guide*, permanent vegetative stabilization should be done during the estimated growing season which is between August 15th and October 15th.

Through a delegation agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the District is authorized to inspect earthmoving activities and respond to complaints from earthmoving activities. By practicing common sense erosion control, such as stabilizing the exposed soil surface as soon as possible and minimizing the amount of exposed soil at any given time, sediment pollution can be avoided.

If your site is at final grade and you plan to utilize grasses to stabilize the soil, then permanent vegetative stabilization should be applied. According to DEP, permanent vegetative stabilization is defined as having 70% uniform coverage of erosion-resistant, permanent vegetative cover. Permanent cool season grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass, fescues, and perennial ryegrasses are the normal species planted for this area. A mixture of these grasses can generally be applied at a rate of 5 lbs/1000 sq/ft. A nurse crop should also be incorporated with the grass mixture. Nurse crops usually consist of a small grain such as winter wheat or annual rye grass. Straw or hay mulching should also be applied to all seeded areas as well. The mulching protects the seed from erosion and retains moisture for better seed germination.

Prior to seeding, it is recommended to have your soil tested to determine the specific nutrient requirements. The test results will determine the actual amount of fertilizer and lime necessary to establish newly-seeded areas. Soil test kits are available at the Penn State Extension Service for Huntingdon County located at 10722 Fairgrounds Road, Suite 6, Huntingdon.

If the earthmoving activities are ongoing and the final grading will not occur during the growing season, temporary stabilization measures should be established. Temporary stabilization during the **non growing** season consists of applying straw or hay mulch at 3 tons/acre. To help assure that your mulching efforts and investment are not going to blow away, the mulch should be properly anchored. The three most common methods are netting, crimping, or emulsifying. Depending on the time of year and in combination with mulching, annual rye grass can be applied at a rate of 40 lbs/acre. Small grains such as winter wheat or winter rye can be applied at 3 bushels/acre.

Depending on several site-specific conditions, temporary sediment control measures such as straw bale barriers or silt fence may also need to be installed down slope of the disturbed area. These control measures will help filter runoff until the site is permanently stabilized. All control measures should be monitored for maintenance on a weekly and after each rain event basis. Control measures should not be removed until the upslope areas are established with permanent cover. Remember, good erosion control efforts will save you both time and money so establish vegetation on those exposed areas as soon as possible and your erosion and sediment problems should be minimized.

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