



# CONSTRUCTION BMPs

~minimizing erosion with sediment barriers and mulching~



Portland Water District

**Purpose:** Sediment barriers, followed by mulching, are common construction BMPs (Best Management Practices) that intercept and retain sediment from disturbed or unprotected areas. Together these practices minimize pollutants flowing from your property into local streams and lakes. The installation of erosion control measures as directed in these guidelines will meet the requirements of the Maine Erosion and Sediment Control Law.



Before



After



ECM

## **Sediment Barriers:**

- ❖ Sediment barriers must be installed before construction of any project that causes soil disturbance, and must be maintained until the area is fully stabilized and vegetation is established.
- ❖ Install sediment barriers across or at the bottom of a slope and down gradient of the area of disturbed earth. Sediment barriers should not be placed in areas of concentrated water flows.
- ❖ Erosion Control Mix (ECM) berms are the simplest method of filtering sediment, but silt fences are another option. At a minimum, berms should measure 4' wide by 1.5' high. If silt fences are used, they must be entrenched, kept taut, and installed according to the manufacturer's directions (see diagram).
- ❖ ECM berms can be left in place after construction is complete, but silt fences should be removed once areas upslope have been stabilized. Once the site is stable, ECM can be raked out and seeded down, or removed and used as mulch elsewhere.



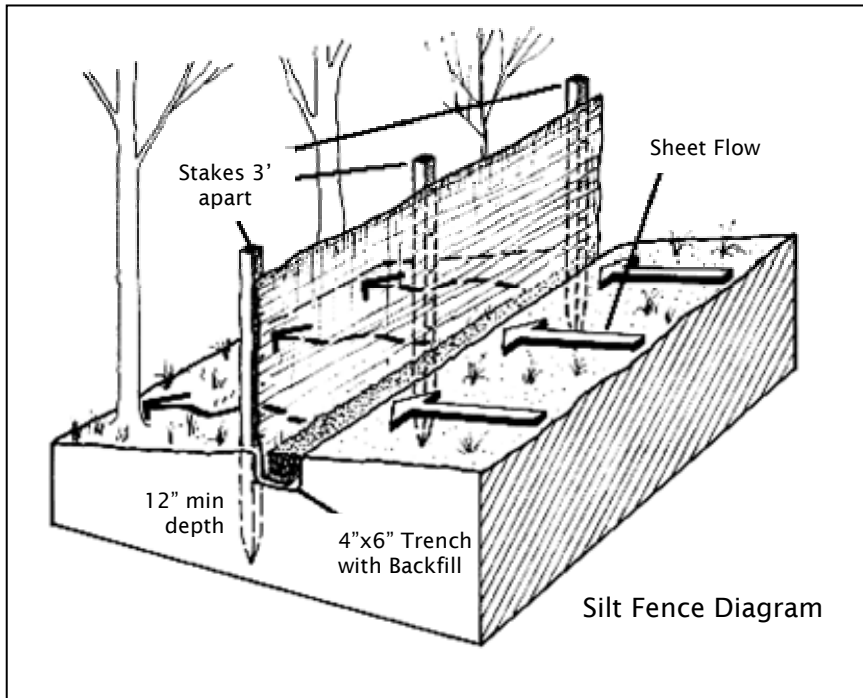
ECM Berm

## **Mulching:**

- ❖ Mulch all bare areas as soon as possible and prior to any rainstorm. A tarp may be used instead of mulch to cover these areas overnight. Mulch should be thick enough so that the soil is not visible. The following types of mulch are best suited for construction projects:
- ❖ *Hay mulch* or *straw* is used as a temporary protective measure to cover bare soils and newly seeded areas. Secure the hay mulch by walking over it.
- ❖ *Erosion Control Mix (ECM)* is a special mix of wood waste and gravel that holds up to runoff and has a natural look. It is a long-term soil cover that will eventually allow the growth of new vegetation.



Hay Mulch



**Materials:** Contact your local contractor or gravel pit to see if Erosion Control Mix is available in your area. This relatively new product may also be called: Slope Stabilizer, Erosion Control Mulch, or Superhumus. Stump grindings may also be used for sediment berms in areas with low slopes.

Hay and straw mulch is available in bales from local farms and hardware stores. Silt fences can be purchased from construction supply stores.



**Maintenance:** Until grass and other vegetation is well established, mulched areas and sediment barriers should be inspected regularly for erosion, especially following rain events. Periodically remove sediment and debris that accumulates behind sediment barriers. Erosion Control Mix berms may need to be re-shaped and additional material may be needed to maintain function.

**For more information concerning the Maine Erosion and Sediment Control Law, contact DEP at 1-800-452-1942. For specific details on these conservation measures, consult the Maine Erosion and Sediment Control BMP manual (2003) at:**

**<http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/docstand/escbmps/index.htm>**

Part of the **Conservation Practices for Homeowners** Factsheet Series, available at:  
 Maine DEP (800.452.1942); <http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/docwatershed/materials.htm>  
 Portland Water District (207.774.5961); <http://www.pwd.org/news/publications.php>