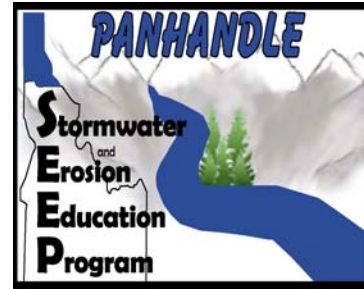


Best Management Practice of the Month (MAY): Hydraulic Mulching

Submitted by Kate Wilson for SEEP



Mulch is an immediate, effective, and inexpensive means of controlling dust and erosion and aiding revegetation of construction sites. It provides immediate protection to soils that are exposed and that are subject to heavy erosion; it retains moisture (which may minimize the need for watering); and it requires no removal because of natural deterioration of most mulching materials.

Hydraulic mulching is a process where wood fiber mulch, processed grass, hay or straw mulch are applied with a tacking agent in a slurry with water to provide temporary stabilization of bare slopes or other bare areas. This mulching method provides uniform, economical slope protection. It may be combined with hydroseeding as a revegetation method.

Hydraulic mulching is an effective way to increase water retention (thereby reducing erosion) for six months or up to one year. Beyond one year, the effectiveness drops off. Hydraulic mulching can be applied to areas that are within about 200 feet of a road or that can otherwise be reached by truck. Small roadside slopes and large, relatively flat areas are well adapted to this method.

The mulch application rate will vary depending on the desired depth and coverage for the type of mulch used. The amount of tackifier used will also vary between products. Tackifier application rate information can be obtained from the product manufacturer.

When adequate moisture exists, the slurry can be combined with seed and fertilizer to initiate stabilization and revegetation in a single application. The mulch usually lasts about a year. The growing vegetation is needed to provide continued stabilization. When seeding is combined with hydraulic mulching, be sure to include an appropriate specified formulation at the specified rate.

Hydraulically-mulched slopes should be inspected periodically for damage due to wind, water, or human disturbance. Repair all damaged areas immediately using hydraulic mulching at the original specifications or straw mulch.

The use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) is required by many jurisdictions and helps protect our water resources. This BMP is brought to you by the Stormwater and Erosion Education Program (SEEP), a program initiated provide information and training to the construction community, regulators and homeowners on erosion and sediment control.