

EC-2 PRESERVATION OF EXISTING/NATURAL VEGETATION

For assistance, contact the District Environmental Planners and the Roadside Program Administrator at ITD Headquarters Maintenance Section.

Refer to: ITD Standards and Specifications for Highway Construction, Sections 201 and 202.



BMP Objectives

- Perimeter Control
- Slope Protection
- Borrow and Stockpiles
- Drainage Areas
- Sediment Trapping
- Stream Protection
- Temporary Stabilizing
- Permanent Stabilizing

Definition and Purpose

The key component to long-term permanent erosion control on roadsides is a diversified stand of well-established perennial vegetation. To achieve this objective, existing vegetation should be preserved and left undisturbed as much as possible. Established vegetated areas provide buffer strips, stabilize ground surfaces and slopes, reduce runoff, filter stormwater, as well as protect water quality and aesthetics.

Preservation of existing/natural vegetation (grass, forbs, shrubs, and trees) should be considered on all projects with ground disturbing activities. The easiest and most cost-effective way to preserve vegetation is to retain well-established vegetation. Specific vegetated areas may be set aside between clearing limits and rights-of-way. If removal of vegetation is not necessary beyond the grading area, then existing vegetation shall be left undisturbed.

Appropriate Applications

Vegetated areas within the grading area shall be retained whenever possible. Preserving vegetation can be beneficial for: flood plains, roadside ditches and channels, wetlands, stream banks, steep slopes, staging areas, and other special areas where erosion control is critical and engineered controls would be difficult to establish, install, or maintain.

Where NPDES permit coverage is required and surface waters are located within 50 feet of the project's earth disturbances, a Natural Buffer must be retained (exceptions do exist and are described below). See the NPDES permit for details, as well as the ITD SWPPP template.

Limitations

- Preservation of natural vegetation may be impractical in some situations because of limited Right-of-Way, work being performed under a 404 permit, or may not be cost effective.

- Local, state, or federal regulations may require specific vegetation to be preserved and protected, including species of concern, threatened or endangered species, and candidate species. The Contractor and ITD personnel shall consult with the appropriate agencies including but not limited to the Idaho Fish and Game (Conservation Data Center), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA-Fisheries, Idaho Department of Lands, and the Idaho Native Plant Society for more information. These species are generally handled through the Environmental Document and may include USFS, BLM, and the Tribes.

Design Parameters

- All construction projects should be designed to preserve existing vegetation to the extent possible or practicable. Preservation activities may involve work staging or sequencing, installing perimeter or other controls/considerations that will preserve existing natural vegetation in certain areas where it would otherwise be removed.
- The Contractor and ITD personnel shall minimize the impact of construction activities on existing vegetation and check the project plans and SWPPP for areas designated for vegetation preservation.
- ***Areas that will be established for preserving natural vegetation should be clearly identified and delineated onsite, in the plans and specifications and shall be incorporated into the project's SWPPP.*** The Contractor shall ensure that existing vegetation remains healthy and undamaged. The Contractor shall replace all damaged vegetation.
- The Contractor and ITD personnel shall keep all construction equipment, materials, and waste out of the designated areas and prevent unauthorized traffic from disturbing the vegetated area.
- Whenever possible, existing drainage patterns through or into the natural area shall left unmodified.

Maintenance and Inspection

- Conduct inspections as required by the NPDES permit or contract specifications.
- Maintain all devices or markings installed to delineate areas to be preserved and protected for the duration of the project.