

Diversion Terraces Are Important Soil Erosion & Sedimentation

Control

By KEN TURNER

A new dimension to soil erosion control is appearing in the form of allowable standards of soil loss being set by law.

Two states, Ohio and Pennsylvania, now have laws which prohibit soil loss and soil sediment pollution beyond certain guidelines. Nearly all states are considering similar legislation. Oregon will have this, the Model State Act for Erosion and Sedimentation Control, introduced in the 1973 legislature. Environmental concern throughout the nation has brought about this pressure.

An expressed goal of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is that an upland tributary shall not add to a downstream, more sediment than the downstream river is already carrying. This criteria could cause our Willow Creek Watershed some problems.

Major sources of soil sediment are primarily logging, construction and farming. Our summerfallow in the Columbia Basin farmlands are unchallenged as the greatest problem area. Steep sloping unprotected summerfallow contributes excessive amounts of sediment. Light soils contributing to air pollution from wind erosion is also sited.

Is Erosion To Be Illegal

Farmers are not going to be legislated out of business, but more conservation work is going to have to be done. It will, however, take an all out effort on many farms to be within the allowable standards. Some crop land may have to go back to grass eventually.

The important point is that the burden of responsibility is placed on the farmer and the local SWCD, where farm co-operators and others will have the major voice in setting up realistic standards and solutions. It will be a self-help and locally regulated project by design, but the results will have to be better than in the past.

An alarmist point of view is that if voluntary and a local approach is not more effective and does not stop the excessive soil loss the EPA or the DEQ will step in and enforce it in a way we might find hard to live with.



By DON BELLAMY

Silt coming from the dryland farming areas of Morrow County creates a major water pollution problem. The steep slopes and the depth and type of soil are some of the reasons for large soil losses during cloud-bursts and winter runoffs.

Diversion terraces is one type of conservation practice used to slow the amount of erosion and soil loss. Other practices such as strip cropping, contour farming and grass seedings may be used in conjunction with diversions but it takes the diversion to give complete control.

Diversions are constructed around and above the area to be protected on a grade of 0.8 to 1.5 feet of fall per 100 feet of length. The diversion removes the volume of water, which would otherwise run straight down the slope and off the field, and transports it to a natural drainage. This natural drainage is shaped and seeded into a grassed waterway for protection of the channel. Dams may be constructed across this waterway for channel protection and for holding water and accumulating what silt does come from the field.

Between the diversions, grass may be seeded on shallow soil area or slopes which are too steep or odd shaped for continued farming. Alternate strips of grain and fallow can be used between the diversions to give added control. These should be laid out after the diversion is built.

Removing much of the excess water with diversions and used in combination with the other practices gives a very effective control in the dryland grain growing areas. Most farms have a need for additional

diversions and it is cheaper by far to keep the soil on the farm than it is to dredge from the river, from reservoirs or to clean from our streets and highways.

Rhea Creek

By BRYCE KEENE

The Rhea Creek Watershed Project was first started in 1963, sponsored by the Heppner Soil and Water Conservation District. Application for assistance under Public Law 566 was made in August of that year. Since that time a great deal of work and study has been put forth by the State Engineers office and the members of the Heppner SWCD. In 1968 the State Engineers began its study of feasible sites and costs, and determined the site at the Ruggs Ranch was the most suitable. Core drilling was made and a Preliminary Investigation Report was submitted in the fall of 1972, showing a benefit to cost ratio of 1.1 : 1.0.

The farmers and interested parties will be called to meet in the near future and this Preliminary Investigation Report will be presented to them.

COLUMBIA-BLUE MTN. RC & D BOARD ELECTED

Reelected Ed Hoeft, Pilot Rock, as president. Other officers are Marion Weatherford, Arlington, first vice president; Wheeler County Judge A.E. Leckie, second vice president; Morrow County Judge Paul Jones, third vice president; Bill Thomas, Grant County rancher, fourth vice president; Ralph Smuckie, Weston rancher, secretary; Russell Erickson, Condon rancher, treasurer.

District Annual Report

	Number	Units
New Cooperators	1	19,038 acres
Services to Individuals	612	
Detailed Soil Survey		84,900 acres
Conservation Plans	4	53,895 acres
Conservation Plans Revised	4	13,955 acres
Units of Government Assisted	11	
Services to Groups	112	
Chiseling and Subsoiling		210 acres
Conservation Cropping System		2,630 acres
Contour Farming		2,401 acres
Crop Residue Management		2,756 acres
Critical Area Planting		172 acres
Debris Basin	33	
Deferred Grazing		2,923 acres
Diversion		365,148 feet
Pond	1	
Grassed Waterway		11 acres
Irrigation Pipeline		34,999 feet
Irrigation System, Sprinkler	11	1,914 acres
Irrigation Water Management		625 acres
Land Leveling		58 acres
Minimum Tillage		1,957 acres
Pasture & Hayland Management		615 acres
Pasture & Hayland Planting		528 acres
Pipeline for Livestock Water		21,271 feet
Proper Grazing Use		3,251 acres
Range Seeding		237 acres
Spring Development	1	
Stock Trail		15,840 feet
Stripcropping		50 acres
Structure for Water Control	31	
Well	8	
Woodland Improvement		126 acres
Land Adequately Treated		13,496 acres

Tough Erosion Law Proposed

Courtesy of Southern Umatilla SWCD

The Oregon Soil and Water Commission is preparing legislation for the next legislature that will make it a misdemeanor for a farmer or land developer to change the land surface in any manner without an adequate plan to keep the land from eroding. The intent of the legislation is to protect landowners from indiscriminate neighbors.

The legislation proposed to reduce damage from sediment to lakes, rivers and adjacent lands by placing the responsibility for a negligent act of leaving the soil unprotected on the landowner or developer.

The Commission will have the responsibility for developing a state-wide erosion control plan. Each Soil and Water Conservation District will then develop standards for their District. These Standards will be used to determine if the land use change is being carried out with adequate erosion protection standards.

This legislation, if passed, will have some very definite impacts on future farming operations. Changes will have to be made in the present large single field methods of farming in the Columbia Basin counties of Oregon.

This legislation would reduce the dust problems that have been occurring in Northern Umatilla County where large blocks of land are coming under irrigation. It would require the land developer to provide adequate ground stabilizing methods before removing present natural cover.

With this legislation the future should see more windbreaks, stripcropping, terracing and other cultural practices reminiscent of the midwest.

White's Grading Service

Tel. 422-7260 & 422-7213

lone

Grading
and
Earth Moving

Paul Pettyjohn Co.

MOBIL DISTRIBUTOR lone

Distributor for

Chipman Chemicals

Stauffer Chemicals

All Types of Farm Chemicals Available

Serving Morrow & Gilliam Counties

Telephone 422-7254