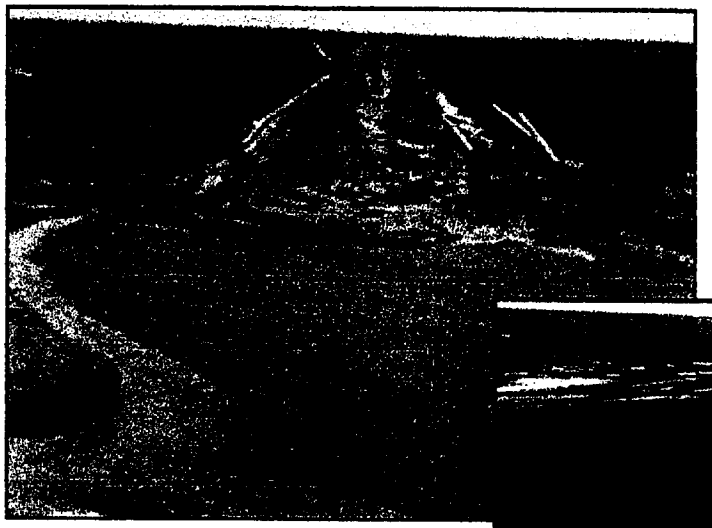
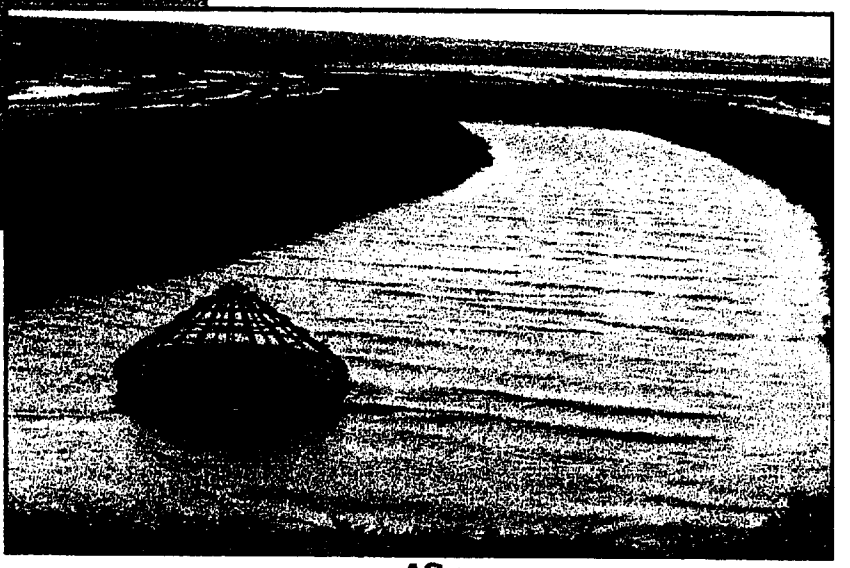
FARM WATER QUALITY PLANNING MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

Sediment Basin
#350

University of California Cooperative Extension
Natural Resources Conservation Service



Before



After

Sediment Basins are constructed to collect and store sediment. Sediment Basins are designed to include perforated riser pipe to allow water to slowly filter out of the basin.

Sediment Basins retain the heavier soil particles and allow runoff water to pass through. Water and Sediment Control Basins #638 are larger and designed to detain peak runoff water as well as sediment.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Retains soil on the property • Can provide near complete off-farm sediment control • Retains some fine-grained sediment that may contain adsorbed pesticides and nutrients	• Requires frequent cleaning out • Sediment mounds must be re-spread on fields • For large quantities of off-farm sediment, it can be expensive to install and maintain • Loss of farmable acreage • May cause pollutants to leach into the groundwater

Practice Costs

The cost is directly proportional to the field size and sediment yield. Reducing sediment yield will reduce the cost significantly. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that other conservation practices be installed in conjunction with a sediment basin. The construction cost is a one time expense. Annual maintenance is a continuous cost to keep the sediment basin properly operating. Cost does not include loss of land from production.

Practice Effectiveness for Reducing Water Quality NPS Pollution Potential

Erosion-sheet & rill	Erosion-streambank	Pesticides-leaching	Pesticides-dissolved in runoff	Pesticides-adsorbed to sediment	Nutrients-leaching	Nutrients-surface waters
				moderate		

Empty boxes indicate information not yet collected for this practice

Additional sources of information regarding sediment basins:

UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Program http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/
UC Weed Research and Information Center http://wric.ucdavis.edu/

The picture and some of the information in this management sheet has been taken from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Handbook of Conservation Practices practice #350. Contact your local NRCS office or visit http://www.nrcs.usda.gov for more information.

Picture provided by Daniel Mountjoy, USDA-NRCS

USDA NRCS
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Field Office Technical Guide, Section I

A Practice Specification has not been prepared. Specifications and design details will be prepared upon request of the Area Engineer or State Conservation Engineer.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

SEDIMENT BASIN

(No.)
CODE 350

DEFINITION

A basin constructed to collect and store debris or sediment.

PURPOSE

- Preserve the capacity of reservoirs, wetlands, ditches, canals, diversion, waterways, and streams
- Prevent undesirable deposition on bottom lands and developed areas
- Trap sediment originating from construction sites or other disturbed areas
- Reduce or abate pollution by providing basins for deposition and storage of silt, sand, gravel, stone, agricultural waste solids, and other detritus

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies where physical conditions or land ownership preclude treatment of a sediment source by the installation of erosion-control measures to keep soil and other material in place or where a sediment basin offers the most practical solution to the problem.

CRITERIA

Sediment basin design and construction shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations.

The capacity of the sediment basin shall equal the volume of sediment expected to be trapped at the site during the planned useful life of the basin or the improvements it is designed to protect. If it is determined that periodic removal of sediment will be practicable, the capacity may be proportionately reduced.

The design of dams, spillways, and drainage facilities shall be according to NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 378 (Pond), Conservation Practice Standard 410 (Grade Stabilization Structure) or according to the requirements in NRCS TR-60 (Earth Dams and Reservoirs), as appropriate for the class and kind of structure being considered.

Temporary basins having drainage areas of 5 acres or less and a total embankment height of 5 feet or less may be designed according to NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 638 (Water and Sediment Control Basin).

All disturbed areas shall be treated as soon as possible after construction ends to control erosion and prevent excess sediment from leaving the site.

Provisions shall be made for dewatering sediment pools if necessary for safety and vector control.

Fencing and other safety measures shall be installed as necessary to protect the public.

Due consideration shall be given to good visual resource management.

CONSIDERATIONS

Large sediment basins may have an effect on the peak discharge rate from a watershed. Planners should consider this, and take steps to mitigate any potential negative effects this may have on riparian habitat downstream from the structure.

Visual aesthetics may be a concern, especially in urban or suburban areas. To address these concerns, the basin could be designed to blend with the surrounding topography, or plantings could be proposed to screen the view from surrounding homes or buildings.

The nesting success and survival rate of ground-nesting species will increase if mowing is delayed until after the nesting season during operation and maintenance operations.

Using native species for revegetation will increase habitat diversity.

Cultural Resources Considerations

NRCS's objective is to avoid any effect to cultural resources and protect them in their original location. Determine if installation of this practice will have any effect on any cultural resources.

Document any specific considerations for cultural resources in the design docket and the Practice Requirements worksheet.

GM 420, Part 401, the California Environmental Handbook and the California Environmental Assessment Worksheet provide guidance on how the NRCS must account for cultural resources. The Field Office Technical Guide, Section II contains general information, with Web sites for additional information.

Endangered Species Considerations

Determine if installation of this practice, along with any others proposed, will have an effect on any federal or state listed Rare, Threatened or Endangered species or their habitat. NRCS's objective is to benefit these species and others of concern, or at least not have any adverse effect on a listed species. If the Environmental Evaluation indicates that the action may adversely affect a listed species or result in adverse modification of habitat of listed species which has been determined to be critical habitat, NRCS will advise the land user of the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and recommend alternative conservation treatments that avoid the adverse effects. Further assistance will be provided only if the landowner selects one of the alternative conservation treatments for installation; or at the request of the landowners, NRCS may initiate consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and/or California Department of Fish and Game. If the Environmental Evaluation indicates the action will not affect a listed species or result in adverse modification of critical habitat, consultation generally will not apply and usually would not be initiated. Document any special considerations for endangered species in the Practice Requirements Worksheet.

Water Quantity

1. Effects on the water budget, especially on volumes and rates of runoff, infiltration, evaporation, transpiration, deep percolation, and groundwater recharge.

2. Effects on downstream flows and aquifers that would affect other water uses and users.

3. Effects on volume of discharge flow on the environmental, social, and economic conditions.

4. Effects on the water table downstream and the results of changes of vegetative growth.

Water Quality

1. Effects on erosion, movement of sediment, pathogens, and soluble and sediment-attached substances that could be carried by runoff.

2. Effects on the visual quality of onsite and downstream water resources.

3. Effects of construction and early establishment of protective vegetation on the surface and ground water.

4. Effects on wetlands and water-related wildlife habitats.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for installing sediment basins shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

Provisions for controlling erosion and reducing sediment loss will be included. Specify rates of seed, mulch, and fertilizer, appropriate planting dates, and method(s) of establishment.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The sediment basin will be inspected after major storms for damage that may affect its function and performance. Any damage will be promptly repaired.

Mow as need to maintain adequate vegetative cover and to prevent the establishment of undesirable species.