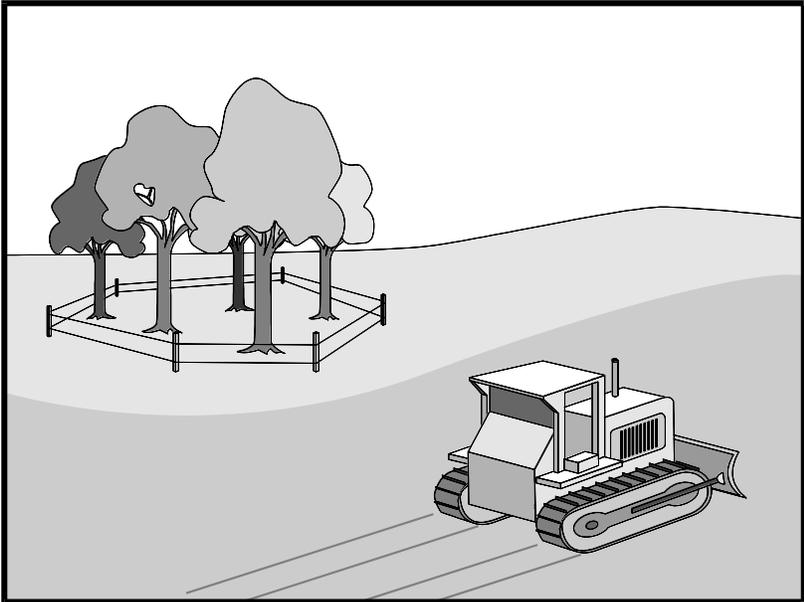


# Preservation of Existing Vegetation EC-2



### Description and Purpose

Carefully planned preservation of existing vegetation minimizes the potential of removing or injuring existing trees, vines, shrubs, and grasses that protect soil from erosion. During post-fire recovery many plants can recover after fire depending on the severity of the burn. It is important to leave existing vegetation if the plants do not threaten personal safety or property (hazardous trees in danger of falling should be identified first). Preservation of existing vegetation promotes faster revegetation of burned areas and provides refuge for returning wildlife.

### Suitable Applications

Preservation of existing vegetation is suitable for use on most projects. Large project sites often provide the greatest opportunity for use of this BMP. Suitable applications include the following:

- Areas within the site where no construction activity occurs or occurs at a later date. This BMP is especially suitable to multi year projects where grading can be phased.
- Areas where natural vegetation exists and is designated for preservation. Such areas often include steep slopes, watercourse, and building sites in wooded areas.
- Areas where local, state, and federal government require preservation, such as vernal pools, wetlands, marshes, certain oak trees, etc. These areas are usually designated on the plans, or in the specifications, permits, or environmental documents.

### Categories

EC	Erosion Control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SE	Sediment Control	<input type="checkbox"/>
TC	Tracking Control	<input type="checkbox"/>
WE	Wind Erosion Control	<input type="checkbox"/>
NS	Non-Stormwater Management Control	<input type="checkbox"/>
WM	Waste Management and Materials Pollution Control	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Legend:

- Primary Objective
- Secondary Objective

### Targeted Constituents

Sediment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nutrients	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trash	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metals	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bacteria	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oil and Grease	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organics	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Potential Alternatives

None



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- Where vegetation designated for ultimate removal can be temporarily preserved and be utilized for erosion control and sediment control.
- Protecting existing vegetation buffers and swales.

## **Limitations**

- Requires planning by the owner/developer, contractor, and design staff.
- For sites with diverse topography, it is often difficult and expensive to save existing trees while grading the site satisfactory for the planned development.

## **Implementation**

The best way to prevent erosion is to not disturb the land. In order to reduce the impacts of new development and redevelopment, projects may be designed to avoid disturbing land in sensitive areas of the site (e.g., natural watercourses, steep slopes), and to incorporate unique or desirable existing vegetation into the site's landscaping plan. Clearly marking and leaving a buffer area around these unique areas during construction will help to preserve these areas as well as take advantage of natural erosion prevention and sediment trapping.

Existing vegetation to be preserved on the site must be protected from mechanical and other injury while the land is being developed. The purpose of protecting existing vegetation is to ensure the survival of desirable vegetation for shade, beautification, and erosion control. Mature vegetation has extensive root systems that help to hold soil in place, thus reducing erosion. In addition, vegetation helps keep soil from drying rapidly and becoming susceptible to erosion. To effectively save existing vegetation, no disturbances of any kind should be allowed within a defined area around the vegetation. For trees, no construction activity should occur within the drip line of the tree.

## **Timing**

- Provide for preservation of existing vegetation prior to the commencement of clearing and grubbing operations or other soil disturbing activities in areas where no construction activity is planned or will occur at a later date.

## **Design and Layout**

- Mark areas to be preserved with temporary fencing. Include sufficient setback to protect roots.
  - Orange colored plastic mesh fencing works well.
  - Use appropriate fence posts and adequate post spacing and depth to completely support the fence in an upright position.
- Locate temporary roadways, stockpiles, and layout areas to avoid stands of trees, shrubs, and grass.
- Consider the impact of grade changes to existing vegetation and the root zone.
- Maintain existing irrigation systems where feasible. Temporary irrigation may be required.

# Preservation of Existing Vegetation EC-2

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- Instruct employees and subcontractors to honor protective devices. Prohibit heavy equipment, vehicular traffic, or storage of construction materials within the protected area.
- Consider pruning or mowing vegetation instead of removing it to allow for regrowth.
- If possible, retain vegetation buffer around the site and adjacent waterways.

## Costs

There is little cost associated with preserving existing vegetation if properly planned during the project design, and these costs may be offset by aesthetic benefits that enhance property values. During construction, the cost for preserving existing vegetation will likely be less than the cost of applying erosion and sediment controls to the disturbed area.

## Inspection and Maintenance

During construction, the limits of disturbance should remain clearly marked at all times. Irrigation or maintenance of existing vegetation should be described in the landscaping plan. If damage to protected trees still occurs, maintenance guidelines described below should be followed:

- Verify that protective measures remain in place. Restore damaged protection measures immediately.
- Trench as far from tree trunks as possible, usually outside of the tree drip line or canopy. Curve trenches around trees to avoid large roots or root concentrations. If roots are encountered, consider tunneling under them. When trenching or tunneling near or under trees to be retained, place tunnels at least 18 in. below the ground surface, and not below the tree center to minimize impact on the roots.
- Do not leave tree roots exposed to air. Cover exposed roots with soil as soon as possible. If soil covering is not practical, protect exposed roots with wet burlap or peat moss until the tunnel or trench is ready for backfill.
- Cleanly remove the ends of damaged roots with a smooth cut.
- Fill trenches and tunnels as soon as possible. Careful filling and tamping will eliminate air spaces in the soil, which can damage roots.
- If bark damage occurs, cut back all loosened bark into the undamaged area, with the cut tapered at the top and bottom and drainage provided at the base of the wood. Limit cutting the undamaged area as much as possible.
- Aerate soil that has been compacted over a trees root zone by punching holes 12 in. deep with an iron bar and moving the bar back and forth until the soil is loosened. Place holes 18 in. apart throughout the area of compacted soil under the tree crown.
- Retain protective measures until all other construction activity is complete to avoid damage during site cleanup and stabilization.