



Grass Roots for Conservation



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Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District

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GOT COVER CROPS?

Last fall you planted your cover crops and they have been growing throughout the winter. Now as we move into spring, it is time to think about how you will manage their termination before planting your cash crop. There are four main methods of cover crop termination: winterkilling, tilling, mowing or crimping, and herbicides. Each have their benefits and disadvantages. Winterkilling is the easiest form of termination, but is only applicable to certain species, such as radishes or oats that cannot tolerate our cold winter temperatures. However, if the winter is not harsh enough to kill the crop, you may need to depend on another type of termination to completely kill it. Tilling is an effective form of termination, but can be expensive and negate many of the positive benefits of cover crops. Mowing or crimping are not as widely used and are limited by growth stage of the cover crop and are only applicable to certain cover crop species.



The most commonly used form of cover crop termination is herbicide treatment. When deciding how and when to kill your cover crop with herbicides there are many factors that need to be taken into consideration. The first is the cover crop species. Is your cover crop a broadleaf, grass, or a mix of both? Depending on your answer to this question, different types of herbicides will need to be used. Cover crop mixes provide great benefits, but can require more care when selecting an herbicide due to the combination of species. Always make sure you consult the herbicide label or a weed control guide to make sure the herbicide you select will be effective on your type of cover crop. Growth stage and height of the cover crop can affect the type of herbicide and rate. In certain growth stages, an herbicide may not be as effective, and it may be better to consider another method of termination. ALWAYS consider your following cash crop when making herbicide selections. Make sure any residual effects will not carry over, and observe the planting restrictions.

Several other factors out of your control can also come into play when terminating cover crops, but with good planning complications can be avoided. Make sure to scout the field for weeds that have moved in over the winter. Many cover crops help with weed suppression, but may not be 100% effective. Double check that your herbicide will kill these weeds as well as the cover crop. In addition, the weather can play a role in herbicide effectiveness. Cool and cloudy conditions that sometimes develop in the spring can slow herbicide effectiveness. You also want to apply the herbicide early enough in the day that it has time to work before the temperatures drop at night. By considering this, you can help to maximize the effectiveness of the herbicide by applying on days where it will be successful. With an effective strategy, cover crop termination can be easily integrated into your pre-planting and planting plan. In addition, remember, it is not too early to start planning your cover crop strategy for next year!

BLOGGING BMP'S

Welcome back to another edition of Blogging BMP's, It has been a few months since we last got together and I wanted to update everyone on the status of the ongoing permit transition. This information will apply to any landowner or developer that has an open Rule 5 permit for disturbing 1 or more acres of land during the construction process. In the January edition of Blogging BMP's I discussed these changes and the need for project owners to file a continuation of coverage on the regulatory e-portal that the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, or IDEM, uses to track its permit information. This process was given a window of three months to complete and the deadline is quickly approaching. As of May 12th 2022, all projects that wish to remain active will need to have made the transition into the e-portal, essentially letting IDEM know that you will abide by the changes that have been made to the permit. When the process started, the owner of the project should have received an email guiding them to the regulatory e-portal to make those changes. If you did not get contacted to make this change or for additional information on this and other permit related items please visit <https://www.in.gov/idem/stormwater/construction-land-disturbance-permitting/> or hold your smart phone camera over the QR code below.

So, what are the changes that took effect with the implementation of the new permit? There are several, but the main changes are as follows

Waste that is "not appropriately managed" will require a covered waste receptacle.

2. Clear signage is needed for washout facilities

3. More activities/materials are called out for management including:

- Fuel, hydraulic fluid, oil, and other petroleum products
- Application and storage of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides
- Chemical hazards like preservatives, additives, curing compounds, acids, solvents, and paints
- Washing of applicators and containers used for paint, grout, mortar, and other materials



Self monitoring inspection reports are still required at least once per business week and for 1/2 inch rain events. Requirements are being modified in the following two ways: Rather than after a rain event, inspection reports can be completed in the 24 hours prior to an anticipated 1/2 inch rain event as a method of preparing the site. Areas of a project that are fully stabilized (70% dense coverage) only need inspected once per month. This means projects that have reached final stabilization but cannot close their permit due to other outstanding issues only need to inspect once per month.

Site stabilization must be initiated by the 7th day an area is left idle and completed within 14 days after it has been initiated.

- Initiated = seeding of the exposed area and application of mulch or other temporary surface stabilization method
- Completed = area is temporarily stabilized so that there is little to no risk of erosion

Compacted areas prepared for an impervious surface final land use are excluded from these requirements provided run-off does not cause erosion and sediment control issues.

A **project management** log should be kept on-site and/or with the SWPPP that includes:

1. Documentation of any site discharges
2. Corrective action details and timelines
3. Compliance response
4. Record of off-site borrow, disposal, and staging areas
5. Inspection information
6. SWPPP modifications

*Note that Peritrack inspection reports cover most of the above elements.

The timelines for **corrective actions** unless otherwise directed by local or state inspectors are as follows:

A repair or temporary solution must be completed within 48 hours of identification (i.e. silt-fence repair or installing a temporary measure to address an immediate discharge issue)

Full BMP replacement or installation of a new BMP must be completed within 7 days of need identification

If you have any questions about these changes or are considering a construction project that is more than one acre, please contact Todd Clark, Conservationist at the SWCD. My email is tclark@elkcoswcd.com or call or office at 574-523-2030. **You may also visit our website www.elkcoswcd.org.**

Extra Edition

BLOGGING BMP'S

I know what you are thinking, do we really need more information on best management practices after the update that you just gave us on the CGSP? I have an answer for that and it has to do with the blog being silent since January in an effort to promote our Capture the Credits event with Farm Babe and Max Armstrong (which was awesome, by the way). Now I am going to make up a little for lost time and give you some information that effects not only the construction world, but also the agricultural side of things.

If you have been following along with me from the beginning you may remember a page that I did way back in October of 2020 discussing the on-site soil stockpiles and ways of managing them or relocating them. After many months of monitoring these stockpiles and speaking with contractors and landowners about the value of good soil and the need for it all over the county, I have come to the realization that many people are not aware of the requirements that the EPA, IDEM, and Elkhart County have when it comes to where these may go, how they are monitored, and who needs to be notified when soil is moved around. These issues arise with two different circumstances, off-site disposal and off site borrow areas that are not permitted gravel pits.



The main question we get is why do we (EPA, IDEM, IDNR, Army Corp of Engineers, and Elkhart County) care about this. The answer is fairly simple.

1. When we take soil off a site, it is usually more than just a few scoops. It can be millions of yards of soil going up and down the roads in large trucks that create a significant change in traffic patterns. Imagine living on a nice quiet county road and one day there are 100 dump trucks passing your house. You may want to know what is going on. If the SWCD knows what is going on we will have an answer for the general public.
2. Most farmers and landowners who take advantage of free soil delivered to their property are not creating hills for the kids to sled on in the winter, rather, they are filling in low spots and wet holes. The problem with this is, wet holes and low spots are possibly wetlands or floodway/floodplains. If these are filled in they will change the course of water and potentially create issues downstream or elsewhere in a farm field.
3. If these piles are not stabilized after they are moved, they have potential to create sediment pollution in our ditches and streams if erosion occurs and the stockpile is in a bad location.

These are not the only issues that may arise with all of the hauling of dirt, but they give you the idea.

So what are the requirements and who do you notify?

1. If you are a contractor and are planning on creating a borrow or disposal site that is associated with an existing project that has a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) in place, simply notify the SWCD and make the amendment to the SWPPP. This is usually a map with the location and the route from site to disposal. We will also need a plan for stabilization for the spoils site to prevent sediment pollution.
2. If you are a land owner and have been approached to receive soil or have soil removed from your property, ask the contractor if they are affiliated with a larger project and/or if they are willing to go through the permitting process to ensure the proposed location is an acceptable place to dispose of or extract soil.
3. If your borrow/disposal area is larger than 1 acre you will need to create a separate SWPPP that covers that site alone. This process does not happen overnight so it is best to plan well in advance if there is a possibility that you will need to incorporate off-site areas to supplement your project.

As always, I am here to answer any questions on this topic or anything else stormwater related. For more information on these requirements visit <https://www.in.gov/idem/stormwater/construction-land-disturbance-permitting/applicability-of-327-iac-15-5/> or call me at 574-523-2032 or send me an email to tclark@elkhartcounty.com and I will help you through the process. It is better to ask the questions before than to deal with the consequences when you don't follow the guidelines.

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The second tier/business membership has an annual donation of \$125.00 or more.

Second tier membership guarantees at least two business card sized ads in our monthly newsletter "Grass Roots" and recognition at our Annual Meeting by way of a slide show.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 29 Goshen Arbor Day: Goshen Rieth Interpretive Center, Millrace Park - 410 W Plymouth Ave., 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

April 30 Earth Day: Elkhart Environmental Center from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

May 16 SWCD Board Meeting: 5:30 PM, SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN

May 30, Memorial Day Holiday: Our office will be CLOSED for the Memorial Day Holiday.

June 20 SWCD Board Meeting: 5:30 PM, SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN

July 4 Independence Day Holiday: Our office will be CLOSED for the Independence Day Holiday.

July 18 SWCD Board Meeting: 5:30 PM, SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN

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