

development of a fairly high density residential neighborhood on a steep site, and it has retained the site's character. The extra effort is compensated by the greater market value. New slopes should be graded to appear natural; thus, they should have uneven, irregular, rounded, or undulating surfaces. The regular crisp, straight slope and grading of the typical site is inappropriate for this type of project. Detailed grading work is often overlooked when in fact it is the foundation for the appearance and character of the entire site. It is this particular aspect of site development that underscores the importance of using talented, able professional contractors. Slopes with irregular inclinations, rather than a single grade across the entire face, will appear more natural. To increase the natural appearance of a slope, the distance between the top of slope and the toe should vary according to the different slope lengths.

Minimizing the Impact of Site Grading

The most important element in minimizing the disturbed area is the design itself. Site layout and design should be accomplished such that they effectively synthesize the development program or objective and minimize the amount of disturbance and of impervious area. As the site is regraded to provide the necessary shape and surfaces on which to construct the proposed site elements, the impacts of the earthwork increase. One of the most common and significant impacts of the grading work itself is erosion, which then often generates sediment pollution in streams and lakes. Another common impact is blowing dusts, which can accumulate and pollute nearby water systems. The changes in site grades resulting from the earthwork can cause water to drain in new and different patterns. The temporary construction drainage pattern is often neglected in the project planning, and this oversight can become a serious problem if it is not managed properly. The impact could cause off-site damage to wildlife habitat and surface water quality. Other negative impacts may include punitive fines, restoration costs, increased project costs, and both immediate and future public relations problems.

The simplest construction project can foster a wide range of emotional reactions within a community. The potential loss of wildlife habitat or tree masses often upsets people living in an area to be developed, and they will resist the new development strenuously. This reaction can arise regardless of the real habitat value of the development area. Sometimes the impetus for opposition comes from the construction activity by itself. To prevent construction-phase damage to open space and green areas, early identification of these habitat areas and drainage patterns must be completed in the planning stages and accommodated throughout the construction phases.

Critical habitat areas or areas that are to serve as buffers to such areas should be clearly marked in the field, and equipment operators must be instructed as to the purpose of the marks. Tree masses that are to be saved should be identified and protected by fences or barriers to isolate them from the busy construction activities. The most common environmental impact on