

Land Development Without Harming Metro Lakes

Land development around Omaha metro lakes provides tremendous economic benefits to the City and to Douglas County. Developments provide new places for people to live, increased recreational opportunities, and economic growth. However, they also pose a significant threat to metro lakes. Soil excavation and grading operations loosen large amounts of soil that can flow or blow into the lakes directly or indirectly through storm drains. Sediment and other pollutants harm lake water quality, aquatic organisms and habitat.

To protect the metro lakes, urban land development must be guided by plans to limit runoff and reduce pollutant loadings beginning with site design, site excavation and grading and continuing through construction of homes and businesses. To be truly effective, runoff pollution prevention must be a collective effort by developers, site engineers, contractors, builders, laborers and home and business owners.

Best Management Practices for Land Development

- Develop an erosion and sediment control plan.
- Utilize nonstructural best management practices to manage storm water runoff and nonpoint source or runoff pollution.
- Route clean water around the site.
- Use cluster development.
- Preserve open space and existing trees.
- Respect contours and natural features of the landscape.
- Use wetlands and stream buffers to control runoff pollution.
- Stabilize hillsides and steep slopes.
- Properly dispose of construction wastes such as oil, cement, and debris.
- Perform major equipment repairs away from the job site.
- Designate a location away from storm drains for refueling or vehicle/equipment maintenance that must be done on site.
- Utilize City of Omaha Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Manual and Best Management Practices for Construction Sites.
- Never hose down dirty pavement or impermeable surfaces where fluids have spilled.
- Cover stockpiles and excavated soil with secured tarps or plastic sheeting.
- Designate an area well away from streams or storm drains for parking vehicles and equipment.
- Maintain all vehicles and heavy equipment-inspect frequently for leaks.
- Clean sediment, debris, trash etc. from the building site, roads and storm drains at the end of each day.
- Remove construction equipment from the site as soon as possible.
- Join a lake watershed council.



Extension Educator Steve Tonn works to ensure that best management practices are applied.

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