

This quarterly newsletter is intended to increase public awareness and provide educational information on the importance of environmental planning and implementation on the local, state and federal levels.

July – September 2005



# Pitt County Environmental Planning

**At a glance:** Fines levied against construction sites ♦ The World's Largest Retailer, **Wal-Mart**, reverses stormwater strategy ♦ Monthly SESC Activity Report ♦ Maintaining a Compliant Construction Site

## Two Pitt Developers Assessed for SESC Violations

At the July 27, 2005 meeting of the Pitt County Technical Review Committee, land developers **Bristolmoor, LLC** and **Charles Lewis** were each fined \$5,000 for violations of Pitt County's Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control ordinance.

**Bristolmoor, LLC**, developer of Arden Ridge, Section 3, under notice of violation since June 15, 2005 for failure to construct and maintain adequate measures to prevent soil erosion from polluting a neighboring blue line stream, was assessed a \$5,000 penalty for damages that violated the Pitt County SESC ordinance.



Pitt County's Soil Erosion Enforcement Officer, Jonas Hill, stated that "while the two violations were for different reasons, both posed a severe threat to our environment."

Pitt County officials will continue to monitor these sites. Although penalties have been assessed, the two developers still must bring their sites into compliance with the county SESC ordinance.



**Charles Lewis**, developer of South Oaks Aerodrome, was charged \$5,000 by the committee for disturbing 19 acres of land without an approved soil erosion and sedimentation control plan. Clearing the land commenced prior to Pitt County Planning Department's receipt of the preliminary plan, and was

### Monthly SESC Activity Report

	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
New Projects	3	1	2	8	2
Site Inspections	81	82	80	137	142
Notices of Violation	1	2	7	2	2
Disturbed Acres	6.56	6.38	41	62.29	3.44

To be added to our growing list of readers, please contact:

**Jonas Hill**, Planner II [jnhill@co.pitt.nc.us](mailto:jnhill@co.pitt.nc.us) or **Randy Cahoon**, Planning Assistant

[rkcahoon@co.pitt.nc.us](mailto:rkcahoon@co.pitt.nc.us)

**Pitt County Planning Department** 1717 West Fifth Street Greenville, NC 27834

Telephone: (252) 902-3250 Fax: (252) 830-2576 <http://www.pittcountync.gov/depts/planning>



**PUBLIC MEETINGS** Planning Board – 3rd Wednesday of each month at 5:30 pm  
County Commissioners – 1st and 3rd Monday of every month (9 am and 6 pm, respectively)



## Wal-Mart Raising the Bar on On-site Construction Practices

Hot on the heels of paying out the largest civil penalty ever assessed for violating EPA stormwater regulations (\$3.1 million to the states of Tennessee and Utah, plus the US Government), **Wal-Mart**, the world's largest retailer and one of the largest US property developers, has adopted a program of cutting edge technologies designed to comprehensively address compliance with federal regulations on stormwater management.

Described by Shirley Morrow, CPESC manager of stormwater compliance for Wal-Mart Stores Inc., as an "aggressive, stringent program with zero tolerance for violations," the program, launched in July 2004, offers a boatload of carrot and stick approaches to runoff management.

All Wal-Mart construction managers and contractors must receive Storm Water Professional training, provided in-house by EPA certified trainers. Project superintendents are required to conduct daily inspections, submit weekly summary reports, perform two inspections per month with the project manager, and all sites are inspected monthly by Wal-Mart's construction manager. Each contractor responsible for land-disturbing activity is provided with the latest information on stormwater compliance; there are a variety of weekly meetings with both civil engineers and with contractors to discuss stormwater issues.

The new policy has been enforced a number of times over the past year, predominantly in cases involving construction vehicles tracking sediment offsite. Disgruntled project superintendents and general contractors unwilling to work within the stringent program of controls have been replaced either before projects begin, or during all phases of construction.

With over 375 estimated new store locations under construction currently, involving an average of six to twenty-five acres of disturbed land per site, and over 40 contractors, 180 civil engineers, and more than 1,460 certified stormwater professionals involved in Wal-Mart construction, the stormwater compliance program stands to permanently alter the entire US erosion control industry.

## Maintaining a Compliant Site

A **check dam** is a small device – rock, gravel bags, or sandbags – installed individually by hand or mechanically (but not dumped) across a natural or man-made channel or drainage ditch, used to reduce flow velocity and encourage sediment to settle. Usually installed as a temporary measure during the establishment of vegetative lining of channels, this device is used both for soil stabilization and sediment control. Once the grass has sufficiently matured to protect the ditch or channel, the check dam is removed. Check dams may be installed along a level contour in small open channels, but not in live streams. They are not to be placed in grass lined channels unless erosion is expected, since installation can damage established vegetation.

Check dams require extensive maintenance following high velocity flows, generally caused by heavy rain events. They must be inspected after each significant rainfall. Accumulated sediment must be removed when depth reaches one-third of the check dam height, and sediment should be removed prior to permanent seeding or soil stabilization. Even under the best of circumstances, check dams promote sediment trapping; removal of the dam or subsequent storms can cause sediment to become re-suspended, defeating the purpose of this device.

A **sediment trap** is used in conjunction with sediment fences or other control devices and serves two purposes: reduction of flow velocity, and creation of a temporary holding tank allowing gravity to draw suspended solids out of storm water. Remaining water can be filtered through geotextile or other screening materials before it enters a stormwater system or natural water course, although most sediment traps are not built to include this feature.

Sediment traps are simple to construct, relatively inexpensive and easily moved when a particular phase of construction is complete. They are created to control and contain sediment, and are constructed by excavating a suitable area, or across a swale. They should be built prior to rainy periods (summer months), and should be completed before the launch of a construction project. In terms of maintenance, a good sediment trap allows access for sediment removal, and should be inspected every 24 hours during extended periods of rainfall. All traps need to be inspected both before and after rain events, and any captured runoff still standing 72 hours after a storm should be siphoned off. A common problem with sediment traps is embankment seepage, which can lead to collapse of the trap. When accumulated sediment fills at least one-third of the trap, it should be cleaned out.

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