

VEGETATION ESTABLISHMENT FOR SOIL PROTECTION

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and its conservation partners are working to help you and your community recover from the recent wildfires. NRCS technical teams, working through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) and providing conservation technical assistance services, are helping people recover from problems associated with wildfires including soil erosion, water runoff and drainage, and vegetation damage. The goal of these programs is to protect lives, prevent damage to buildings, roads, bridges and other structures, and to protect soil resources and re-establish vegetation.

KEEP DAMAGED WOODY VEGETATION INTACT

With the exception of trees and other vegetation that may pose a personal safety or property damage risk, leave existing standing vegetation intact. Although trees and shrubs will likely appear dead or dying, many may be able to recover in time. Tree and shrub roots are highly efficient at holding the fragile soil in place. For those trees and shrubs that must be removed, remove only the portion above the soil surface. Try not to remove the roots or the soil around the roots.

The services of a professional arborist should be retained to help you determine which trees and shrubs pose a risk and should be removed.

Contact your local Cooperative Extension Office for advice.

SEEDING AND MULCHING

Although burned vegetation may remain on your site, seeding can still be done. There's a good chance that native seeds on your property are still alive and will germinate. Old and new vegetation provides protection to the soil and conserves moisture. If you have questions about whether you need to perform seeding and mulching activities on your land, contact the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office in your area. The professional conservationists that serve that office may provide an on-site evaluation and/or recommendations for seeding mixtures as well as guidance on proper seeding and mulching methods.

IRRIGATION

If rain has fallen in the area and the soil is moist, discontinue irrigating hillsides to avoid over saturating the soil. Natural rainfall will germinate new seeds.

July 2002 Arizona