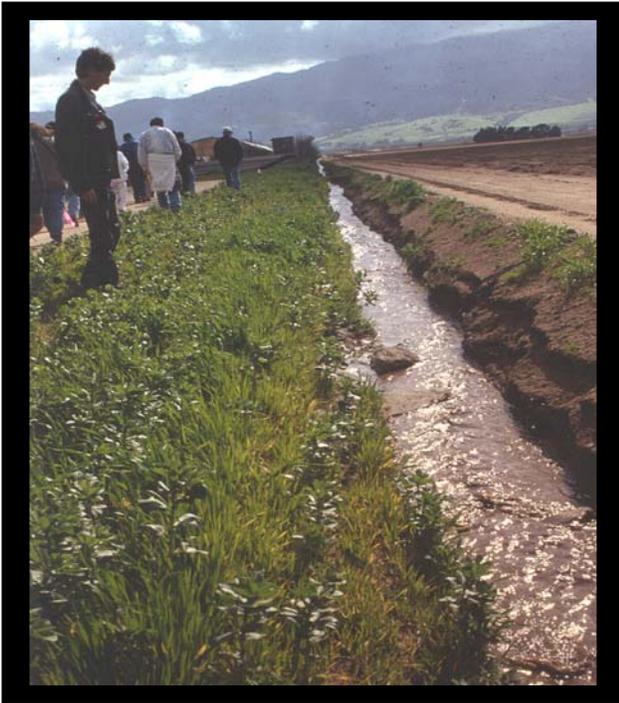


VEGETATED WATERWAYS

What is a Vegetated Waterway?

A vegetated waterway involves constructing an area for planting typically grasses and shrubs along a farm 'ditch', road or other area which drains a cropped field and provides a pathway for concentrated surface runoff. Perennial (species that live longer than one year) grasses and shrubs are recommended as they require less maintenance and cost less in the long-term.



What are some benefits of a Vegetated Waterway?

- protect water quality
- prevent erosion & capture sediment
- suppress weeds & reduce spraying
- dust control to prevent wind erosion
- reduce 'ditch' maintenance
- potential beneficial insect habitat
- potential nutrient filtration

Is a Vegetated Waterway right for you?

Grassed waterways are a practical method for controlling erosion from cropped lands. Loss of soil means less fertility and less production, requiring costly inputs such as fertilizer and compost. They are particularly critical on lands next to surface waters, like streams or wetlands. Planting a vegetated waterway may help avoid neighbor complaints and potential fines and enforcement due to downstream effects of soil and soil-associated chemicals.

Establishing of your Vegetated Waterway

1. Choose California Native to reduce the long-term maintenance needs of your Vegetated Waterway!
2. Plant in the Fall corresponding to the typical cool season growth of most California natives, thus reducing irrigation needs.
3. Prepare the Ground using hand weeding or pre-emergent herbicide. When using herbicide, wait a couple weeks before planting.
4. Time Your Planting so the plants or seeds are in the ground just as the rains begin. To guarantee establishment, you may want to provide supplemental water.
5. Species Selection will depend on both the site's characteristics (location, soil, etc...) and your objectives (e.g. erosion/weed control, beneficial insects, maintenance limitations).

Grasses - Creeping Wild Rye and Meadow Barley have been most commonly used on the Central Coast.

Forbs - Some common forbs are Cinquefoil, Creekside Monkey Flower,

Shrubs - Common native shrubs include CA Blackberry, Snowberry

A more detailed list of species may be obtained from the Resource Conservation District or Community Alliance with Family Farmers.

6. Grass Plug Planting - Plugs are planted with 1-3 foot spacing. Dig a hole slightly larger than the plug, drop the plug into the hole, then backfill with loosened soil to allow for initial root growth. Soil to root contact is the most important aspect of the planting.
7. Shrub Seedling Planting - Spacing recommendations vary according to species. Generally, shrubs should be planted 6-8 feet apart.
8. Planting with Seeds will vary depending on the grass species selected. Creeping Wild Rye is the most common waterway grass and is used at 12-15 pounds per acre. Broadcast by hand or with a crank style belly seeder until it "looks like enough". Seed drills specifically for native seed exist, but cost a few thousand dollars.
9. Maintaining Your Vegetated Waterway will depend on your resources, interest, and time available. Grasses are typically maintained by *mowing*, however *burning* is an alternative some growers prefer. For shrubs, a mowing regime can be followed using caution not to damage woody plants being established. The following weeding regimes have been followed by other growers:
 - a) wait and see, making the native grass compete with the weeds
 - b) mow the stand about 2 times per year (Winter/Spring). Do this before weeds flower and spread their seed. This also keeps the plot from over-growing.
 - c) spot weed by hand when laborers are available (Spring)

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