

## Building a house or adding on to your property?

### Don't forget to think about water quality!

was thought to be necessary to create a "clean slate" for things such as grading the site, moving equipment, installing utilities and designing new site drainage. Removing all the vegetation makes it easy to work on the site but isn't the best thing for water quality or soil health.

*Undeveloped land with trees and understory vegetation naturally absorbs rain water, preventing flooding, recharging the water table and cleaning the water as it percolates through the vegetation and natural soil structure.*

**It takes 500 years to create 1 inch of soil.** The process of grading and excavating removes or damages nearby vegetation, changes the soil structure, alters natural drainage patterns and increases soil erosion. While it is necessary to disturb the land when you build your new house, **being selective on how and where you build on your lot makes a long-term difference on your local water and soil quality.**

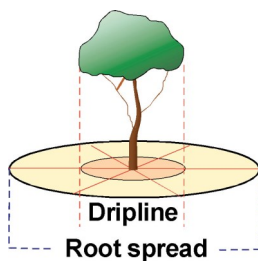


## *You can help protect your local water & soil quality by how you build!*

Hire a knowledgeable, certified contractor who will work with you and consider the following options ....

### **Before Construction**

- Check with your county to make sure your lot is not in a floodplain. Living by a stream is nice until it erodes your yard away and floods your house.
- Identify existing drainage areas on the lot and utilize these areas as much as possible in the new design.
- Have your septic system area approved and roped off before equipment moves onto the site. The weight of the equipment compacts the soil and ruins the soil structure.
- Design equipment traffic routes on the site to use your future driveway as much as possible to reduce soil compaction.
- Fence off all the trees you want to keep, securing at least double the width of the tree's dripline. Saving groups of trees gives them a better chance of surviving, helps prevent soil erosion and promotes more sun and wind protection.



- In your final design, review how your new lot will receive and drain rain water from the surrounding areas.

### **During Construction**



- Your contractor is required to use stormwater features such as silt fences, vegetative buffer strips next to streams, and storm drain inlet protection to prevent soil from leaving your site.
- There should be very little soil running off of your lot during a rain.



### **After Construction Additions**



- Install a rain garden in the low spot of your yard to help capture storm water coming from your property.
- Install a rain barrel or a cistern to capture and reuse the water that drains from your roof—it also saves you money on watering.
- Mature trees utilize large amounts of water and stabilize the soil. Plant trees in places where their roots and size will not become a problem when fully mature.
- Restoring areas of native vegetation on your property increases rain absorption and soil health, and also decreases your mowing costs.



**For More Information**  
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Your contractor should always implement local zoning permit requirements and building regulations into your project.