Chapter 7
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Aesthetics

Public support and cooperation is very important in implementing and maintaining practices and techniques that preserve roadways and enhance overall environmental conditions. The way things "look" is most often the way the public perceives how well things are being done. Care should be taken in design and construction to blend structures and practices with the natural surroundings or to compliment the natural surroundings in a unique and appealing way.

Roadside Debris

Trash and natural occurring materials which are out of place and/or are a detriment to the roadway system are often found along unpaved roads. Many unpaved roads exist in low-traffic, sparsely populated areas which attract illegal dumping and do not get wide-spread public attention when maintenance needs arise. This truly creates an eye-sore, but more importantly, it leads directly and indirectly to damage and degradation of the roadway system and to pollutants in the environment.

Manmade Material

One of the most repugnant eye-sore and detriments are manmade items from bottles and car parts to household appliances and car bodies, and more. Many times these items are dumped along roadways in ditches or other drainage paths which inhibit or redirect runoff which in turn erodes and/or weakens the roadway system.

Promptly haul away or properly bury this material on site (if permitted by law). If left, dumped debris will encourage more dumping and will eventually have a negative effect on the roadway, its drainage system, the environment, and public perception. Beautify and/or barricade the dump site. Aesthetic barricades mixed with other adornments, such as wild flowers, etc., will discourage some illegal dumping.

Natural Material

Often tree limbs, stumps, leaves, grass, rocks, and other natural materials from other locations are dumped along unpaved roads in ditches or other drainage paths. This too inhibits or redirects runoff which in turn erodes and/or weakens the roadway system.

Promptly haul away or properly bury wood and plant material on site (if permitted by law), or, use it in constructive maintenance practices along the roadway. Earth and stone materials can also be spread, buried on site, and/or used in constructive maintenance practices along the roadway. As with manmade materials, if left unchecked, dumped wood, plant materials, earth, and stone will encourage more dumping and will eventually have a negative effect on the roadway, environment, and public perception. Dry, woody materials along the roadside can be a fire hazard also.

Roadside Vegetation Management

Proper maintenance of roadside vegetation will enhance and protect the roadway system, improve traffic safety, and improve public perceptions and attitudes. Thinning tree canopies over and alongside unpaved roads and removal of select trees will hasten drying and encourage grasses and smaller plants. Be careful not to remove mature trees unless absolutely necessary. Also, be careful not to grade or excavate too close to trees. A safe distance is outside the canopy drip line. Inside this distance can damage or kill the tree. Be careful not to cut or expose tree roots if possible. Cutting or exposing tree roots may cause a hazard by making the tree more easily uprooted. When roots are exposed, cover them as quickly as possible or cut them cleanly below the soil surface to prevent disease or other damage. Tree limbs broken during maintenance should be pruned close to the main trunk or branch.

Retaining Walls and Headwalls

These structures provide good protection from erosive forces and lend a neat appearance to other structures such as culverts, bridges, and steep slopes. Inspect and protect walls when performing road and ditch maintenance. Place and compact soil in and around scoured areas of walls and use excavated materials to bolster the strength and stability of walls when performing maintenance. Consider installing stone or concrete headwalls where culverts or bridges are experiencing scour due to turbulence or high velocities.

Beavers

Impoundments constructed by these animals are a great resource for filtering sediments and other pollutants from surface waters, but are a potential threat to roadways and their drainage systems. Dams constructed immediately upstream of a roadway may pose a flooding threat in heavy storms which may break the dam sending excess water onto the roadway. Dams constructed below the structure may inhibit runoff from properly flowing away from the roadway, causing runoff to back onto the roadway. This can cause weakening of the roadway, plugging of culverts with debris, and inappropriate diversion of runoff. Frequent maintenance checks in beaver prone areas can prevent severe damage by taking timely, corrective measures. Anti-beaver devices may be used to discourage beavers from plugging culverts or make them leave the immediate area.