

City of Duluth, MN Sediment Demonstration Project

Description

The City of Duluth received grant funding from the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil and Erosion Control to develop a pilot project for collection of the winter sand used on City Roads.

Background

The City maintains a stock pile of 10,000 cubic yards of sand and may utilize the entire pile during winter snow events. With 600 miles of road to sweep, the City crews are unable to collect all the material immediately after snow melt. Much of the sand ends up on residential boulevards each spring. Residents cleaning their property frequently sweep the sand into the street where it gets into storm drains during the first rain storms before the City street sweepers reach it. The pilot project is intended to test the willingness of the public to collect the material.

The project, currently in progress, was designed to target two neighborhoods. Within those neighborhoods, 49% of residents agreed to participate. Interestingly, community response to the program was so positive that additional collection sites have been set up throughout the City.

Results

Although it is too early to determine effectiveness, the positive public response and the willingness of individuals to collect the material, bodes well for a potential program and may become a partial answer to sediment problems in the streams and the harbor.

While the collected sand cannot be used on roads again (initially the sand particles have rough edges that help with grip, but tires round off the edges making it ineffective for re-use on roads), the material is used by the City as fill, and mixed into the compost mixes used by park maintenance staff. It is all recycled into one activity or another. In Duluth, any material to cut the clay soils and improve gardening is valuable. We also have encouraged home owners to do the same.

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