

EARTH SCIENCE SERIES

PREVENTING EROSION

When you are out in your community or yard, have you ever noticed rocks or dirt wearing away? When you ride in a car or a bus down the highway, have you seen huge rocks with smaller rocks that have broken off right below them? Or have you been to a beach where the sand slowly wears off a dune? The wearing away of land by wind, water, or ice is called **erosion**. It is important to study erosion and in some cases prevent it to help keep us safe.

MATERIALS AND STEPS

- A plant - a clump of grass, a plant out of a pot, or even an artificial plant will work
- Some very fine gravel or dirt
- A measuring cup or pitcher
- Water
- A dishpan or bin

Consider doing this activity outside in case it gets messy!

Turn your dishpan upside down. On one side, put half of your gravel or dirt. On the other side, put the rest of your gravel or dirt, and put your real or artificial plant on top of it. Fill your cup or pitcher so that you have at least two cups of water.

Slowly pour the water first over the uncovered gravel or dirt. Then slowly pour it over your plant. What happened? While most of the material may have washed away uncovered, hopefully the plant helped to protect the material on the other side. This illustrates that planting trees, grass, shrubs, or any other kinds of plants helps hold dirt in one spot and prevents erosion.

FUN FACT

Sometimes erosion can create landscapes of great beauty! The Grand Canyon in the United States was formed by water that kept flowing and wearing away dirt and rock. This area is now a national park.

