



# Memo

**To:** Designers, Contractors, Landscapers and Developers  
**From:** Jessica Watson, Sediment and Stormwater Program Manager  
**Date:** February 21, 2019  
**Re:** Biodegradable Erosion Control Matting

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DNREC has banned the use of **non-biodegradable erosion control matting (plastic/synthetic netting)**.

The netting material used in erosion control matting is either made from natural or synthetic material. Natural fibers are environmentally friendly and are classified as biodegradable, whereas synthetic plastics are classified as degradable. Biodegradable and degradable are not the same thing. Biodegradable means that the material decomposes into elements found in nature in a reasonable amount of time. In contrast, degradable plastics break down into plastic fragments that remain in the environment. The plastic mesh has proven to ensnarl animals and is no longer permitted in Delaware. Only biodegradable products using natural fibers are to be used.

**Erosion Control Matting is typically used for the following:**

1. On Short, steep slopes (3:1 or greater) that are highly erodible, and planting is likely to be too slow in providing adequate protective cover.
2. In vegetated channels where concentrated flows will erode soils.
3. On streambanks or tidal shorelines where moving water is likely to wash out new plantings.
4. In areas where the forces of wind prevent standard mulching practices from remaining until vegetation becomes established.

If you need clarification on whether a product is acceptable, please do not hesitate to contact the Sussex Conservation District or your District Inspector at 302-856-2105. In addition, please refer to Appendix A-3, Geotextile Application Guide, available in the Delaware Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook

<http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/swc/Drainage/Documents/Sediment%20and%20Stormwater%20Program/2019%20February/Regulatory%20Guidance%20Documents%202019/ESC%20Handbook%20-EFF%20FEB%202019.pdf>