

## Module 8: Weathering, Erosion, and Groundwater

### Topic 3 Content: Soil Conservation Notes



#### Ground Cover

Exposed soil is vulnerable to wind, rain, and other forces present at the surface of the Earth. When vegetation like grasses, wild flowers, shrubbery, or other plants are introduced to an area, the soil is protected. The roots of plants act like an anchor to hold the soil together. In some construction areas, or areas that will not grow vegetation, tarps or large sheets of natural fiber cloth are used to cover exposed soil.



#### Terracing

Terracing is one of the most impressive techniques, and it is very effective at protecting soil resources. In this method, farmers rebuild the land into a series of steps. The steps reduce the flow of runoff and the rates of erosion at the same time.



#### Wind Breaks

Wind erosion can be a big problem in open fields where acres and acres of crops are being cultivated. In order to reduce the effects of the wind, many farmers plant shelter belts. A shelter belt can be a row of trees or another tall plant that absorbs wind energy. These belts are also known as wind breaks.



#### Contour Plowing

In areas where agriculture exists on sloping terrain, farmers use a technique called contour plowing. In this technique, the rows of crops are plowed across the slope. It is as if the farmers consulted a topographic map and plowed the hillsides where each contour line appears. Contour plowing slows down runoff from irrigation and rain showers. This reduces the water's erosion ability.