

Designing a Vehicle/Equipment Washpad

By Scot Ender

Ruffridge-Johnson Equipment Co., Inc.

Water flows downhill, oils float and solids sink. There, now anyone reading this is qualified to design an equipment wash area. Or so it would seem.

All of the above statements are true in most cases. However, throw in some soap, some grass clippings and some high ph chemicals and the usual physical characteristics of water, oils and solids will change.

Constructing a washpad should be more than throwing down a slab of concrete that slopes toward a center trench. Do you know anyone who likes to clean the muck out of a drainage trench or catch basin? Which is easier: Shoveling and scooping out a six-foot deep sump area or emptying an above-ground bag filter or cart? Which will get done on a regular basis by your employees?

What if the washpad were constructed so that the natural physical characteristics of oils, solids and chemicals were encouraged to interact and therefore remove themselves from the water? It can be done and it isn't expensive or difficult. Common sense and GOOD PLANNING are the key ingredients in designing a wash area.

Another important aspect of a good washpad is

what happens to the water after it leaves the pad. If you are building a new maintenance facility your odds of getting a permit to discharge washwater to the surface or to a drainfield are slim at best.

So, if your options are to collect the wastewater in a holding tank or to recycle, then the cleaner your discharge, the cheaper it is going to be to dispose of the water or to recycle it.

Make the maintenance of your wash area a simple task. Trap the solids and clippings in an easily compostable manner. Separate the oils and greases for skimming and disposal with other waste oils. Make it easy to do for general maintenance and to keep the wash area looking like it isn't an environmental liability. Step back and take a look at your wash operation and if it looks bad to you, think of how it looks to the golfers and others that may pass by.

ACSP for Schools—

(Continued from Page 25)

How to Get Started

1. The first step is to identify the public or private elementary, middle or high school that you want to adopt.

2. Contact and give a brochure to the principal at the school. Thoroughly explain the program to the principal and get approval before going any further.

3. Fill out the registration form found in the brochure and mail it to The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Schools, along with the \$100 registration fee and the name of the contact person at the school.

After the registration form is processed you will receive a letter confirming the adoption of the school and thanking you for your participation in the program. All materials will be sent directly to the school. Feel free to keep in touch with the school contact for updates on the school's participation in the program.

To obtain a membership packet or to find out more about how the program works, please contact the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Schools at 518/767-9051. To learn more about maximizing the value of your participation as an "adopter," please contact the GCSAA Public Affairs Department at 913/832-4490

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