

RE-VEGETATION OF DISTURBED SLOPES

The slopes in the Kicking Horse Canyon are notoriously unstable and slow to establish plant growth. Construction often results in the removal of existing vegetation that has provided soil reinforcement and erosion control. The seeding of grasses alone, often sufficient on many other projects, is relatively ineffective in this rocky canyon environment. The Ministry of Transportation is experimenting with several techniques to provide initial slope stabilization, and promote the establishment of woody vegetation for long term benefit.



- 'Planting pockets' use filter fabric bags to provide a structural, reinforced pocket area containing topsoil to help 'islands' of plants become established, and thereafter spread on the slope through seed dispersion and/or root systems.



- Live 'planting bags' use filter cloth bags filled with topsoil and moisture-retaining material into which rooted plant stock is planted. This and other techniques are supplemented with the use of fast-growing cottonwood and willow cuttings.



- Planting ledges are created with the installation of straw 'logs' along slope contours. These terraces encourage moisture retention and improve surface soil stability, while plantings of native vegetation become established.