

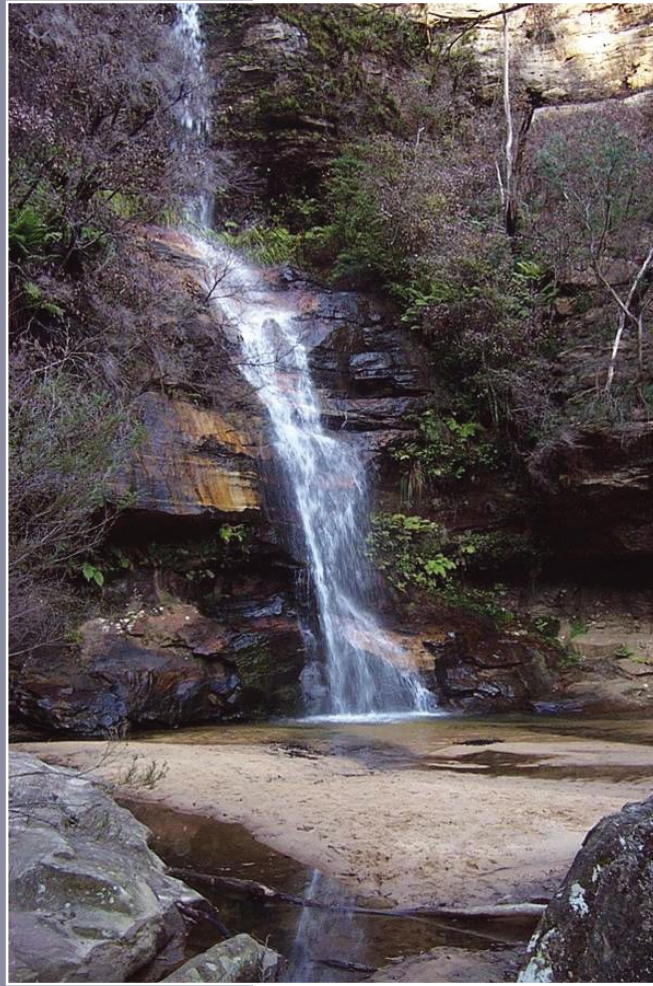
# SEDIMENTATION

in the Blue Mountains



Minnehaha Falls 1960's

Courtesy of Blue Mountains City Library, Local Studies Collection.



Minnehaha Falls  
2003

**Have you ever wondered why in our streams the natural pools are filling with sediment? Why does this occur and what can we do about it?**

## SEDIMENTATION –

the erosion and deposition of soil

### Sources of Sediment

Most soils in the Blue Mountains originate from sandstone rock formations. Steep slopes and heavy rainfall combine to make these porous, friable sandstone soils extremely susceptible to erosion. Erosion occurs naturally over time through weathering, however human activities can accelerate this process.



### Causes of sediment pollution include:

- Land clearing
- Road construction
- Housing development



# SEDIMENTATION

in the Blue Mountains



## Infilling of natural pools

It is natural for sediment to settle out in pools and for this sediment to remain until large floods scour it out. Since these events are uncommon, sediment may remain in pools for long periods, having serious consequences for stream ecosystems.

## Effect On Aquatic Systems

Although sediment is a natural component of streams and creeks it can be damaging when it is present in excess. Sediment can affect our natural ecosystems by:

- Infilling natural pools
- Altering channel shape and stream flow
- Reducing light to submerged plants inhibiting photosynthesis
- Altering macroinvertebrate communities and reducing diversity
- Disrupting the food web by decreasing food and habitat availability

### What can be done to stop sedimentation?

Once sediment has entered waterways it is difficult and expensive to remove. Preventative measures need to be taken to reduce sediment transport into our creeks and can include:

- Revegetation of creek banks- healthy riparian vegetation is effective in reducing bank erosion by slowing the flow of water and filtering sediment
- Containing sediment piles with control structures such as sediment fences
- Covering bare areas of earth with mulch or vegetation
- Planting native plants



**If you notice sediment leaving development sites or entering drains please contact Councils Environmental Health Officers on 4780 5777 or the EPA Pollution line 131 555**



To view other Environmental Fact Sheets  
[www.bluemountains.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bluemountains.nsw.gov.au)