

# ENVIRONMENTAL

# connection

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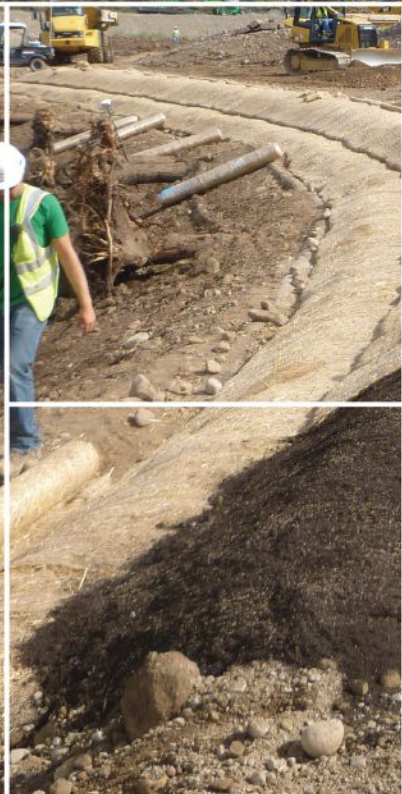
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**IECA** International Erosion Control Association  
REGION ONE



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# IECA members

## Emerald Member Profile

# Custom-Designed Pollution Solutions

Specializing in supplying products to control erosion, manage stormwater and prevent water pollution, Granite Environmental, Inc., based in Sebastian, Florida, offers thousands of variations in sizes, styles and capacities of products and materials to stabilize slopes and banks and protect lakes, ponds, rivers, streams and oceans from sediment and other pollutants.

But, as Karen Smith, the company's sales manager, explains, the real focus of this IECA Emerald Member company extends beyond that.

"Projects, budgets, requirements and site conditions vary from one job site to another," she says. "So, rather than try to force project settings to fit a specific product, we work with technical consultants and manufacturers around the world to produce and to provide customers with products that match the unique features of a project. We really listen to our customers to understand the types of challenges they face on a job site to provide them with the right solutions to their problems, so they can stay in compliance with environmental protection regulations."

In fact, owners Mark and Kerry Wilkie started Granite Environmental to give customers an alternative for getting their projects completed. After years of watching customers having to settle for products that only partially met their needs, the Wilkies put together a team with the sales, marketing and field experience necessary to provide customers the most cost-effective, time efficient and environmentally-friendly way of getting the project done, Smith notes.



*Sloughing solution utilizing straw/wool matting. Photo from the Parson's Nine Mile Creek Project*

"Our philosophy is that it's important to listen to and understand the site challenges our customers face and provide the right solution, not just one solution," she says. "It is also far cheaper and more effective to protect the environment by preventing erosion and other water pollution problems than having to pay for recovery cleanup or remediating a wetland due to poorly planned and implemented projects."

### CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Established in 2007, Granite Environmental started in the construction/industrial field. At first, the company offered innovative products to control silt and debris to keep areas clean.



*Stream bank stabilization utilizing straw/wool matting. Photo from the Parson's Nine Mile Creek Project*

"This was the last line of defense for protecting water quality," Smith says. "Then, we began addressing the sediment problem farther inland and upstream to prevent problems by keeping the soil and water where it needed to be in the first place."

That, in turn, led the company into a broader range of solutions involving water filtration systems and erosion pollution products. Today, the focus of the company's thirty-member staff has expanded to include oil, gas and mining applications and various types of stormwater and erosion pollution, waste water containment and control.

"We now work to provide practical product solutions to customers around the globe in a wide range of industries," Smith says.

Erosion and stormwater management projects range from residential and commercial development to beach and stream restoration. The company has assisted with post-wild fire and other natural and man-made disaster spills and cleanup. Practices include the use



*Revegetation of stream bank utilizing coir matting and living stakes at remediation site. Photo from the Parson's Nine Mile Creek Project*

of natural and synthetic products and materials for use with conventional and biotechnical construction methods.

## SUPER FUND SITE CLEANUP

In one current project, the company is working with Parsons Engineering on a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Super Fund project to remediate contaminated soils in tributary areas off the former industrial area on the shores of Lake Onandaga in central New York near Syracuse. Runoff from this 4.6 square mile site flows into a 285 square mile drainage area. The area of disturbance for the Ninemile project was a little over 14 acres, including 9 acres of remediation and restoration.

Granite Environmental provided natural biodegradable solutions to stabilize slopes after contaminated soils were removed. Then, Parsons Engineering was able to revegetate disturbed areas and manage stormwater in the remediated tributary drainage basin.

“Parsons’ work at the Ninemile Creek and Geddes Brook sites was key to restoring balance in a complex ecosystem,” Smith says. “They needed solutions to reduce or eliminate erosion and sediment loading due to their on-land remediation efforts”

The restoration work included constructing up-gradient and drainage swales and providing controlled flow discharge pathways to Ninemile Creek. Erosion mats and logs helped provide needed stability to sloughing slopes along with filtration for runoff and a substrate for regrowth, she notes.

“We were able to stay responsive to their changes and requirements, provide specs and timelines that worked with the project.” Smith says. The project, which began in 2011, is expected to be completed by 2016.



*Vegetated re-growth over coir matting overlay at reclamation site in Super Fund Project tributary. Photo from the Parson's Geddes Brook Onondaga Wetlands Project*

## PROJECT FOLLOW-THROUGH

Granite Environmental's staff works with customers in supplying needed support for products and methodology called out in Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP) and controlling erosion and sediment based on the Stormwater Project Cycle. This approach is designed to prevent erosion during land clearing operations, control and contain sediment during site improvement activities and, if necessary, recover and dispose of sediment and other polluting materials in an ecologically-sound manner, Smith says.



*Winter view of staked coir logs for bank stabilization and coir mat on face to assist in sloughing. Photo from the Parson's Geddes Brook Onondaga - Wetlands Project*

To help customers address these various needs, Granite Environmental offers an extensive selection of products from coir logs, gutter guards, wattles to geotextiles and turbidity curtains for controlling erosion and sediment to those in stormwater BMPs. The list of products also includes those to mitigate pollution, such as oil spill absorbents and containment berms, trash and debris booms, collapsible and flexible water tanks along with sediment filter bags and dewatering bags.

These products have been used in dredging areas, construction sites, industrial facilities, municipalities and oil, gas and mining areas to help project owners stay in compliance and prevent erosion or pollution,” Smith reports.

Granite Environmental's problem-solvers strive to be responsive to customer needs throughout the entire project, she adds. “We stay in contact with our customers to make sure technical specifications, revisions to site plans and the like are communicated back and forth between our supply chain and the project coordinators, purchasing agents and engineers,” she says. “This was a key element in our partnership with Parsons. In order for Parsons to do the important work they do, we have to stay abreast of the work that we do.”

Another of the company's strengths is an extensive network of manufacturers. As Smith points out, contractors often have little lead time for installing products and onsite storage space can be limited. “We work closely with the manufacturers to ship products in a timely manner to minimize any bottlenecks in the construction schedule,” she says.

## VALUABLE EDUCATION

Keeping current with fast-changing technology in the various fields of erosion and sediment control is a continual challenge for the company's solution providers. That's where membership in IECA pays off, she reports.

“This is how IECA has proven valuable to us,” Smith said. “In fact, the main reason we joined IECA is to access all the education resources available to members. Our business is really customer-driven. We are able to draw on the educational resources of IECA to help our customers make more-informed decisions. And that enables them to do a more effective job in protecting the environment and leaving the world a cleaner, better place.” 