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November 14, 2011

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EARTH: Geotextile Structures – From Sludge to Shoreline Protection to Surfing

Alexandria, VA – What do geology and textiles have in common? More than you might think. Since the 1980s, coastal, ocean and hydraulic engineers have been reinforcing coastlines and cleaning up contaminated water from dredge materials and other sludges and slurries with a revolutionary fabric that combines the strength of certain textiles with geoscientific know-how. So far, geotextile structures have been an integral tool in protecting our delicate coastlines; however, the relative infancy of the innovation leaves many questions unanswered about how these geotechnical marvels will interact with the natural environments they are built to protect.

November’s issue of EARTH magazine digs deeper to find out more about the advancements and challenges facing geotextiles in the future. How will differing environments of wind, sun and surf affect the utility of geotextile structures? And, if these tubes should rip or fail, how dangerous are geotextile structures for fragile ecosystems and even human activities? For more information on the featured article, click here or go online to http://www.earthmagazine.org/earth/article/5c6-7db-b-e.

Geotextile structures not your bag? Check out more stories in this month’s issue of EARTH magazine to learn more about unearthing the ghosts at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico; and to hit the road with author Castlen Kennedy as she travels 4,200 kilometers cross-country in a natural gas powered SUV to test the alternative to traditional petroleum-fueled vehicles. The November issue of EARTH magazine is available online now at http://www.earthmagazine.org/digital/.

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