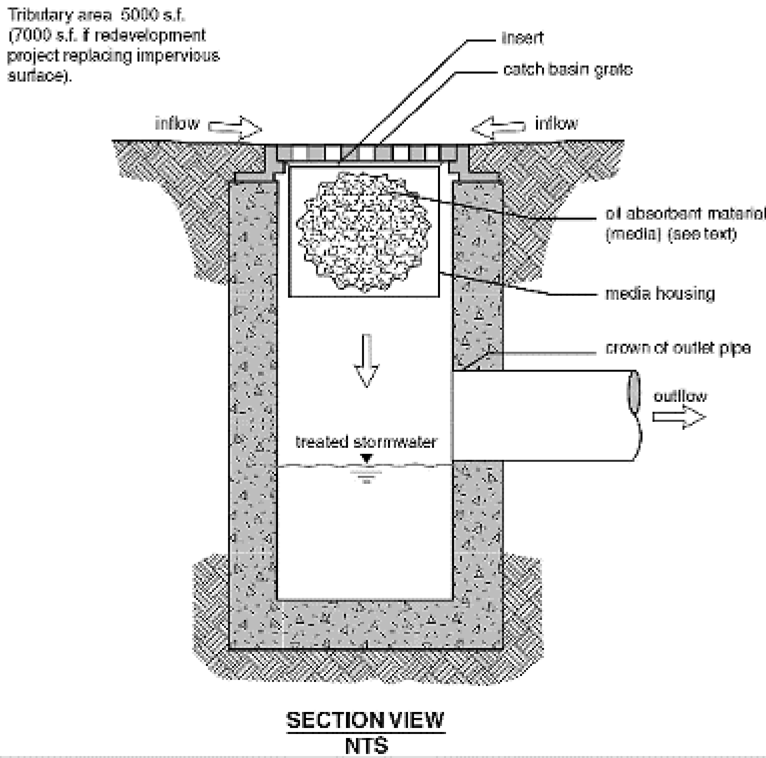
Manufactured Products for Storm Water Inlets

Postconstruction Storm Water Management in New Development and Redevelopment



The typical design of a catch basin insert is a set of filters that are specifically chosen to address the pollutants expected at that site (Source: King County, Washington, 2000)

Description

A variety of products for storm water inlets known as swirl separators, or hydrodynamic structures, have been widely applied in recent years. Swirl separators are modifications of the traditional oil-grit separator and include an internal component that creates a swirling motion as storm water flows through a cylindrical chamber. The concept behind these designs is that sediments settle out as storm water moves in this swirling path. Additional compartments or chambers are sometimes present to trap oil and other floatables. There are several different types of proprietary separators, each of which incorporates slightly different design variations, such as off-line application. Another common manufactured product is the catch basin insert. These products are discussed briefly in the Catch Basin fact sheet.

Applicability

Swirl separators are best installed on highly impervious sites. Because little data are available on their performance, and independently conducted studies suggest marginal pollutant removal, swirl separators should not be used as a stand-alone practice for new development. The best application of these products is as pretreatment to another storm water device, or in a retrofit situation where space is limited.

Limitations

Limitations to swirl separators include:

- Very little data are available on the performance of these practices, and independent studies suggest only moderate pollutant removal. In particular, these practices are ineffective at removing fine particles and soluble pollutants.
- The practice has a high maintenance burden (i.e., frequent cleanout).
- Swirl concentrators are restricted to small and highly impervious sites.

Siting and Design Considerations

The specific design of swirl concentrators is specified by product literature available from each manufacturer. For the most part, swirl concentrators are a rate-based design. That is, they are sized based on the peak flow of a specific storm event. This design contrasts with most other storm water management practices, which are sized based on capturing and storing or treating a specific volume. Sizing based on flow rate allows the practice to provide treatment within a much smaller area than other storm water management practices.

Maintenance Considerations

Swirl concentrators require frequent maintenance (typically quarterly). Maintenance is performed using a vactor truck, as is used for catch basins (see Catch Basin). In some regions, it may be difficult to find environmentally acceptable disposal methods. The sediments may not always be land-filled, land-applied, or introduced into the sanitary sewer system due to hazardous waste, pretreatment, or groundwater regulations. This is particularly true when catch basins drain runoff from hot spot areas.

Effectiveness

While manufacturers' literature typically reports removal rates for swirl separator design, there is actually very little independent data to evaluate the effectiveness of these products. Two studies investigated one of these products. Both studies reported moderate pollutant removal. While the product outperforms oil/grit separators, which have virtually no pollutant removal (Schueler, 1997), the removal rates are not substantially different from the standard catch basin. One long-term advantage of these products over catch basins is that, if they incorporate an off-line design, trapped sediment will not become resuspended. Data from two studies are presented below. Both of these studies are summarized in a Claytor (1999).

Table 1. Effectiveness of manufactured products for storm water inlets

Study	Greb et al., 1998	Labatiuk et al., 1997
Notes	Investigated 45 precipitation events over a 9-month period. Percent removal rates reflect overall efficiency, accounting for pollutants in bypassed flows.	Data represent the mean percent removal rate for four storm events.
TSS[a]	21	51.5
TDS[a]	-21	-
TP[a]	17	-
DP[a]	17	-
Pb[a]	24	51.2
Zn[a]	17	39.1
Cu[a]	-	21.5
PAH[a]	32	-
NO_2+NO_3[a]	5	-

[a] TSS=total suspended solids; TDS=total dissolved solids; TP=total phosphorus; DP=dissolved phosphorus; Pb=lead; Zn=zinc; Cu=copper; PAH=polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons; NO_2+NO_3=nitrite+nitrate-nitrogen

Cost Considerations

A typical swirl separator costs between $5,000 and $35,000, or between $5,000 and $10,000 per impervious acre. This cost is within the range of some sand filters, which also treat highly urbanized runoff (see Sand Filters). Swirl separators consume very little land, making them attractive in highly urbanized areas.

The maintenance of these practices is relatively expensive. Swirl concentrators typically require quarterly maintenance, and a vactor truck, the most common method of cleaning these practices, costs between $125,000 and $150,000. This initial cost may be high for smaller Phase II communities. However, it may be possible to share a vactor truck with another community. Depending on the rules within a community, disposal costs of the sediment captured in swirl separators may be significant.

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Nonstructural BMPs

Experimental practices

Alum Injection

Postconstruction Storm Water Management in New Development and Redevelopment

Description

Alum injection is the addition of alum (an aluminum sulfate salt) solution to storm water, causing fine particles to flocculate (i.e., gather together to form larger particles) and settle out. Other pollutants also can be scavenged. Alum injection can help meet downstream pollutant concentration loads by reducing the concentrations of fine particles and soluble phosphorus. Alum treatment systems generally consist of a flow-weighted dosing system designed to fit inside a storm sewer manhole, remotely located storage tanks to provide the doser with alum, and a downstream pond which allows the alum, pollutants, and sediments to settle out (Kurz, 1998). When alum is injected into storm water it forms harmless precipitates, aluminum phosphate and aluminum hydroxide. These precipitates combine with heavy metals and phosphorus, causing them to be deposited into the sediments in a stable, inactive state (WEF, 1992). The collected mass of alum precipitates, pollutants, and sediments is commonly referred to as floc.

Applicability

The injection of liquid alum into storm sewers has been used to reduce the water quality impacts of storm water runoff to lakes and receiving waterbodies, particularly to reduce high phosphorus levels. Because of high installation and operation costs, alum injection is best applied in situations where a large volume of water is stored in one area, as in the case of combined sewer overflow (CSO) storage areas at wastewater treatment plants. Alum treatment can also be implemented as a pretreatment step to further reduce turbidity and total suspended solids (TSS) (Kurz, 1998).

Siting and Design Considerations

Alum injection systems need to incorporate several design features to properly apply alum and dispose of the floc formed during the process. Dosage rates, which range from 5 to 10 mg of Al per liter, are determined on a flow-weighted basis during storm events (Harper, 1996). Other chemicals, such as lime, may also be added during the process to enhance the pollutant settling. (Often, the pH is raised to between 8 and 11). The design needs to incorporate a doser system, as well as sufficient chemical storage in tanks to minimize the frequency with which they need to be refilled.

Disposal of the floc that settles in the downstream basin is critical, because of the concentration of dissolved chemicals, and also because bacteria and viruses remain viable in the floc layer (Kurz, 1998). In addition to the settling pond, a separate floc collection pump-out facility should be installed to further reduce the chance of resuspension and transport of floc to receiving waterbodies. The pump disposes the floc into the sanitary sewer system or onto nearby upland areas or sludge drying beds. A permit will be required to pump to the sanitary sewer, however. The quantity of sludge produced at a site can be as much as 0.5 percent of the volume of water treated (Gibb et al., 1991).

Limitations

While alum shows some potential as a storm water treatment practice, it has several limitations, including:

- Alum injection is an experimental practice, and little is known about its long-term performance.
- In addition to maintenance, alum injection requires ongoing operation, unlike most other post-construction storm water treatment practices.
- While alum injection can reduce pollutant loads, it cannot control flows or protect downstream channels from erosion.
- Chemicals added during the alum injection process may have negative impacts on downstream waters.
- The precipitates from the alum increase the solids that must be disposed of from the treatment.

Maintenance Considerations

Operation and maintenance for alum treatment is critical. Some typical items include:

- There must be routine inspection and repair of equipment, including the doser and pump-out facility.
- A trained operator should be on-site to adjust the dosage of alum and other chemicals, and possibly to regulate flows through the basin.
- If floc is stored on-site in drying beds, it will need to be disposed of on a regular basis.
- The settling basin will need to be dredged periodically to dispose of accumulated floc.

Effectiveness

Limited performance data of alum injection is available in Table 1. One study (Harper and Herr, 1996) found high removal rates for TSS and fecal coliform bacteria. This study and another (Carr, 1998) showed mixed results on total phosphorus and ortho-phosphorus.

Table 1. Alum injection removal rates

Study	TSS	TP	Ortho-phosphorus	TN	Fecal Coliform Bacteria	Heavy Metals	Zinc	Ammonia
Harper and Herr, 1996	95–99	85–95	90–95	60–70	]99	50–90	-	-
Carr, 1998	-	37	42	52.2	-	-	41	24.5

Cost Considerations

Alum injection is a relatively expensive practice. Construction costs for alum treatment systems range from $135,000 to $400,000; the cost depends on the watershed size and the number of outfall locations treated. Generally, alum treatment is applied to large drainage areas. In one study (Kurz, 1998), an alum treatment system was a successful storm water retrofit for a 460-acre urbanized watershed in downtown Tampa. Operation and maintenance costs, which include routine and chemical inspections, range from $6,500 to $25,000 per year (Harper and Herr, 1996).

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On-lot Treatment

On-Lot Treatment

Postconstruction Storm Water Management in New Development and Redevelopment

Description


A rain barrel is used to collect rooftop runoff using a gutter/downspout system

The term "on-lot treatment" refers to a series of practices that are designed to treat runoff from individual residential lots. The primary purpose of most on-lot practices is to manage rooftop runoff and, to a lesser extent, driveway and sidewalk runoff. Rooftop runoff, and particularly residential rooftop runoff, generally has low pollutant concentrations compared with other urban sources (Schueler, 1994b). The primary advantage of managing runoff from rooftops is to disconnect these impervious surfaces, reducing the effective impervious cover in a watershed. Many of the impacts of urbanization on the habitat and water quality of streams are related to the fundamental change in the hydrologic cycle caused by the increase of impervious cover in the landscape (Schueler, 1994a).

Although there are a wide variety of on-lot treatment options, they can all be classified into one of three categories: 1) practices that infiltrate rooftop runoff; 2) practices that divert runoff or soil moisture to a pervious area; and 3) practices that store runoff for later use. The best option depends on the goals of a community, the feasibility at a specific site, and the preferences of the homeowner.

The practice most often used to infiltrate rooftop runoff is the dry well. In this design, the storm drain is directed to an underground rock-filled trench that is similar in design to an infiltration trench (see Infiltration Trench fact sheet). French drains or Dutch drains can also be used for this purpose. In these designs, the relatively deep dry well is replaced with a long trench with a perforated pipe within the gravel bed to distribute flow throughout the length of the trench.

Runoff can be diverted to a pervious area or to a treatment area using site grading, or channels and berms. Treatment options can include grassed swales, bioretention, or filter strips. The bioretention design can be simplified for an on-lot application by limiting the pre-treatment filter and in some cases eliminating the underdrain (see Bioretention fact sheet). Alternatively, rooftop runoff can simply be diverted to pervious lawn areas, as opposed to flowing directly to the street and thus to the storm drain system.

Practices that store rooftop runoff, such as cisterns and rain barrels, are the simplest in design of all of the on-lot treatment systems. Some of these practices are available commercially and can be applied in a wide variety of site conditions. Cisterns and rain barrels are particularly valuable in the arid southwest, where water is at a premium, rainfall is infrequent, and reuse for irrigation can save homeowners money.

Application

Some sort of on-lot treatment can be applied to almost all sites, with very few exceptions (e.g., very small lots or lots with no landscaping). Traditionally, on-site treatment of residential storm water runoff has been encouraged, but has not generally been an option to meet storm water requirements. There are currently at least two jurisdictions, however, who offer "credits" in exchange for the application of on-site storm water management practices. In Denver, Colorado, sites designed with methods to reduce "directly connected impervious cover," including disconnection of downspout runoff from the storm system, are permitted to use a lower site impervious area when computing the required storage of storm water facilities (DUDFCD, 1992). Similarly, new regulations for Maryland allow designers to subtract each rooftop that is disconnected from the total site impervious cover when calculating required storage in storm water management practices (MDE, 2000).

Siting and Design Considerations

Although most residential lots can incorporate on-lot treatment, the best option for a site depends on site design constraints and the preferences of the homeowner. On-lot infiltration practices have the same restrictions regarding soils as other infiltration practices (see Infiltration Basin and Infiltration Trench fact sheets). If other design practices are used, such as bioretention or grassed swales, they need to meet the siting requirements of those practices (see Bioretention and Grassed Swale fact sheets). Of all of the practices, cisterns and rain barrels have the fewest site constraints. In order for the practice to be effective, however, homeowners need to have a use for the water stored in the practice, and the design must accommodate overflow and winter freezing conditions. These practices are best suited to an individual who has some active interest in gardening or landscaping.

Although these practices are simple compared with many other post construction storm water practices, the design needs to incorporate the same basic elements of any storm water practice. Pretreatment is important for all of these practices to ensure that they do not become clogged with leaf debris. Infiltration practices may be preceded by a settling tank or, at a minimum, a grate or filter in the downspout to trap leaves and other debris. Rain barrels and cisterns also often incorporate some sort of pretreatment, such as a mesh filter at the top of the barrel or cistern.

Both infiltration practices and storage practices typically incorporate some type of bypass so that larger storms flow away from the house. In rain barrels or cisterns, this bypass may be a hose set at a high level of the practice and directed away from the practice and building foundation. These practices also include a hose set at the elevation of the bottom of the practice. The homeowner can use the practice to irrigate landscaping or for other uses by attaching this hose to a standard garden hose, and controlling flow with an adjustable valve. In infiltration practices the bypass may be an aboveground opening of the downspout. As on-lot practices, grassed swales and bioretention can be designed on-line. The design directs all flows to the management practice, but larger flows generally flow over the practice and are not treated.

One important design feature of infiltration practices is that the infiltration area must be located sufficiently far from the house's foundation to prevent undermining of the foundation or seepage into basements. The infiltration area should be separated from the house by at least 10 feet to prevent these problems.

Limitations

There are some limitations to the use of on-lot practices, including the following:

- These practices require some maintenance and require some effort on the part of the homeowner.
- For homeowners who do not enjoy landscaping, it may be difficult for them to find a use for water stored in a rain barrel or cistern, since the water is not potable.
- On small lots, some of these practices may be impractical.
- Even if applied to every home in a watershed, these practices would only treat a relatively small portion of the watershed imperviousness, which is largely composed of roads and parking areas (see Narrower Residential Streets and Green Parking fact sheets).

Maintenance Considerations

Bioretention areas, filter strips, and grassed swales require regular maintenance to ensure that the vegetation remains in good condition (see Bioretention; Grassed Filter Strip; and Grassed Swale fact sheets). Infiltration practices require regular removal of sediment and debris settled in the pretreatment area, and the media might need to be replaced if it becomes clogged (see Infiltration Trench fact sheet). Rain barrels and cisterns require minimal maintenance, but the homeowner needs to ensure that the hose remains elevated during the winter to prevent freezing and cracking. In addition, the tank needs to be cleaned out approximately once per year.

Effectiveness

Although the practices used for on-lot applications can have relatively high pollutant removals (see Infiltration Trench; Bioretention; Grassed Filter Strip; and Grassed Swale fact sheets), it is not clear that these pollutant removal rates can be realized with the relatively low pollutant concentrations entering the practices. Some data suggest that, at least for storm water ponds, there may be an "irreducible concentration" below which no further pollutant removal can be achieved (Schueler, 1996). Another benefit of many on-lot practices is that they generally promote ground water recharge, either directly through infiltration or indirectly by applying or directing runoff to pervious areas.

Cost Considerations

On a cost per unit area treated, on-lot practices are relatively expensive compared with other storm water treatment options. It is difficult to make this comparison, however, because the cost burden of on-lot practices is born directly by homeowners. Typical costs are $100 for a rain barrel and $200 for a dry well or French drain. For many of these practices, homeowners can reduce costs by making their own on-lot practice rather than purchasing a commercial product.

Some treatment practices, such as rain barrels and on-lot bioretention, offer additional benefits to the homeowner that may offset the cost of applying the practice. Similarly, maintenance costs are essentially free, with the exception of replacement of a dry well system, which may require outside help.

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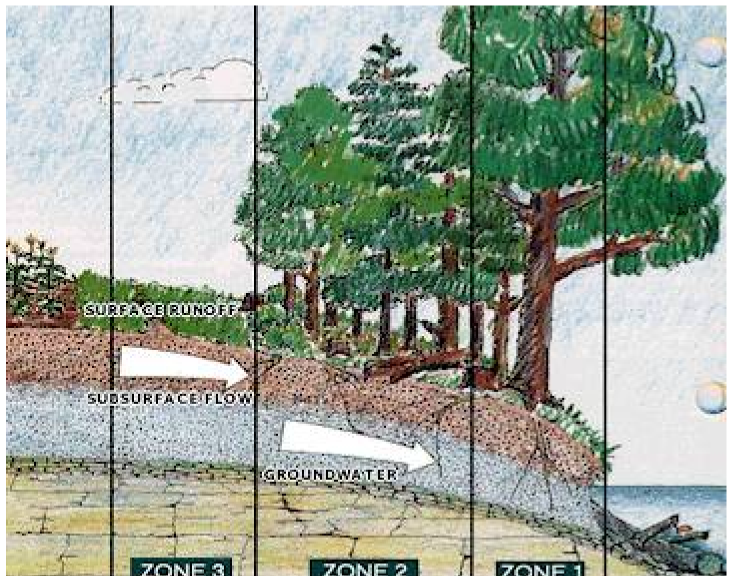
Better site design

Buffer Zones

Postconstruction Storm Water Management in New Development and Redevelopment

Description



Sketch of a typical riparian forest buffer (Source: Chesapeake Bay Program, 2000)

An aquatic buffer is an area along a shoreline, wetland, or stream where development is restricted or prohibited. The primary function of aquatic buffers is to physically protect and separate a stream, lake, or wetland from future disturbance or encroachment. If properly designed, a buffer can provide storm water management and act as a right-of-way during floods, sustaining the integrity of stream ecosystems and habitats. Technically, aquatic buffers are one type of conservation area that function as an integral part of the aquatic ecosystem and can also function as part of an urban forest.

The three types of buffers are water pollution hazard setbacks, vegetated buffers, and engineered buffers. Water pollution hazard setbacks are areas that separate a potential pollution hazard from a waterway. By providing setbacks from these areas in the form of a buffer, the potential for pollution can be reduced. Vegetated buffers are any number of natural areas that exist to divide land uses or provide landscape relief. Engineered buffers are areas specifically designed to treat storm water before it enters into a stream, lake, or wetland.

Applicability

Buffers can be applied to new development by establishing specific preservation areas and sustaining management through easements or community associations. For existing developed areas, an easement may be needed from adjoining landowners. A local ordinance can help set specific criteria for buffers to achieve storm water management goals.

In many regions of the country, the benefits of buffers are amplified if they are managed in a forested condition. In some settings, buffers can remove pollutants traveling in storm water or ground water. Shoreline and stream buffers situated in flat soils have been found to be effective in removing sediment, nutrients, and bacteria from storm water runoff and septic system effluent in a wide variety of rural and agricultural settings along the East Coast and with some limited capability in urban settings. Buffers can also provide wildlife habitat and recreation, and can be reestablished in urban areas as part of an urban forest.

Siting and Design Considerations

There are ten key criteria to consider when establishing a stream buffer:

- Minimum total buffer width
- Three-zone buffer system
- Mature forest as a vegetative target
- Conditions for buffer expansion or contraction
- Physical delineation requirements
- Conditions where buffer can be crossed
- Integrating storm water and storm water management within the buffer
- Buffer limit review
- Buffer education, inspection, and enforcement
- Buffer flexibility.

In general, a minimum base width of at least 100 feet is recommended to provide adequate stream protection. The three-zone buffer system, consisting of inner, middle, and outer zones, is an effective technique for establishing a buffer. The zones are distinguished by function, width, vegetative target, and allowable uses. The inner zone protects physical and ecological integrity and is a minimum of 25 feet plus wetland and critical habitats. The vegetative target consists of mature forest, and allowable uses are very restricted (flood controls, utility right-of-ways, footpaths, etc.).

The middle zone provides distance between upland development and the inner zone and is typically 50 to 100 feet, depending on stream order, slope, and 100-year floodplain. The vegetative target for this zone is managed forest, and usage is restricted to some recreational uses, some storm water BMPs, and bike paths. The outer zone functions to prevent encroachment and filter backyard runoff. The width is at least 25 feet and, while forest is encouraged, turfgrass can be a vegetative target. Uses for the outer zone are unrestricted and can include lawn, garden, compost, yard wastes, and most storm water BMPs.

For optimal storm water treatment, the following buffer designs are recommended. The buffer should be composed of three lateral zones: a storm water depression area that leads to a grass filter strip that in turn leads to a forested buffer. The storm water depression is designed to capture and store storm water during smaller storm events and bypass larger stormflows directly into a channel. The captured runoff within the storm water depression can then be spread across a grass filter designed for sheetflow conditions for the water quality storm. The grass filter then discharges into a wider forest buffer designed to have zero discharge of surface runoff to the stream (i.e., full infiltration of sheetflow).

Stream buffers must be highly engineered in order to satisfy these demanding hydrologic and hydraulic conditions. In particular, simple structures are needed to store, split, and spread surface runoff within the storm water depression area. Although past efforts to engineer urban stream buffers were plagued by hydraulic failures and maintenance problems, recent experience with similar bioretention areas has been much more positive (Claytor and Schueler, 1996). Consequently, it may be useful to consider elements of bioretention design for the first zone of an urban stream buffer (shallow ponding depths, partial underdrains, drop inlet bypass, etc).

Limitations

Only a handful of studies have measured the ability of stream buffers to remove pollutants from storm water. One limitation is that urban runoff concentrates rapidly on paved and hard-packed turf surfaces and often crosses the buffer as channel flow, effectively shortcutting through the buffer. To achieve optimal pollutant removal, the engineered buffer should be carefully designed with a storm water depression area, grass filter, and forested strip.

Maintenance Considerations

An effective buffer management plan should include establishment, management, and distinctions of allowable and unallowable uses in the buffer zones. Buffer boundaries should be well defined and visible before, during, and after construction. Without clear signs or markers defining the buffer, boundaries become invisible to local governments, contractors, and residents. Buffers designed to capture storm water runoff from urban areas will require more maintenance if the first zone is designated as a bioretention or other engineered depression area.

Effectiveness

The pollutant removal effectiveness of buffers depends on the design of the buffer; while water pollution hazard setbacks are designed to prevent possible contamination from neighboring land uses, they are not designed for pollutant removal during a storm. With vegetated buffers, some pollutant removal studies have shown that they range widely in effectiveness (Table 1). Proper design of buffers can help increase the pollutant removal from storm water runoff (Table 2).

Table 1: Pollutant removal rates in buffer zones

Reference	Buffer Vegetation	Buffer Width (meters)	Total % TSS Removal	Total % Phosphorous Removal	Total % Nitrogen Removal
Dillaha et al., 1989	Grass	4.6–9.1	63–78	57–74	50–67
Magette et al., 1987	Grass	4.6–9.2	72–86	41–53	17–51
Schwer and Clausen, 1989	Grass	26	89	78	76
Lowrance et al., 1983	Native hardwood forest	20–40	–	23	–
Doyle et al., 1977	Grass	1.5	–	8	57
Barker and Young, 1984	Grass	79	–	–	99
Lowrance et al., 1984	Forested	–	–	30–42	85
Overman and Schanze, 1985	Grass	–	81	39	67

Table 2: Factors that enhance/reduce buffer pollutant removal performance

Factors that Enhance Performance	Factors that Reduce Performance
Slopes less than 5%	Slopes greater than 5%
Contributing flow lengths <150 feet.	Overland flow paths over 300 feet
Water table close to surface	Ground water far below surface
Check dams/level spreaders	Contact times less than 5 minutes
Permeable but not sandy soils	Compacted soils
Growing season	Nongrowing season
Long length of buffer or swale	Buffers less than 10 feet
Organic matter, humus, or mulch layer	Snowmelt conditions, ice cover
Small runoff events	Runoff events >2 year event.
Entry runoff velocity less than 1.5 feet/sec	Entry runoff velocity more than 5 feet/sec
Swales that are routinely mowed	Sediment buildup at top of swale
Poorly drained soils, deep roots	Trees with shallow root systems
Dense grass cover, 6 inches tall	Tall grass, sparse vegetative cover

Cost Considerations

Several studies have documented the increase of property values in areas adjacent to buffers. At the same time, the real costs of instituting a buffer program for local government involve the extra staff and training time to conduct plan reviews, and to provide technical assistance, field delineation, construction, and ongoing buffer education programs. To implement a stream buffer program, a community will need to adopt an ordinance, develop technical criteria, and invest in additional staff resources and training. The adoption of a buffer program also requires an investment in training for the plan reviewer and the consultant alike. Manuals, workshops, seminars, and direct technical assistance are needed to explain the new requirements to all the players in the land development business. Lastly, buffers need to be maintained, and resources should include systematic inspection of the buffer network before and after construction and work to increase resident awareness about buffers.

One way to relieve some of the significant financial hardships for developers is to provide flexibility through buffer averaging. Buffer averaging allows developers to narrow the buffer width at some points if the average width of the buffer and the overall buffer area meet the minimum criteria. Variances can also be granted if the developer or landowner can demonstrate severe economic hardship or unique circumstances that make compliance with the buffer ordinance difficult.

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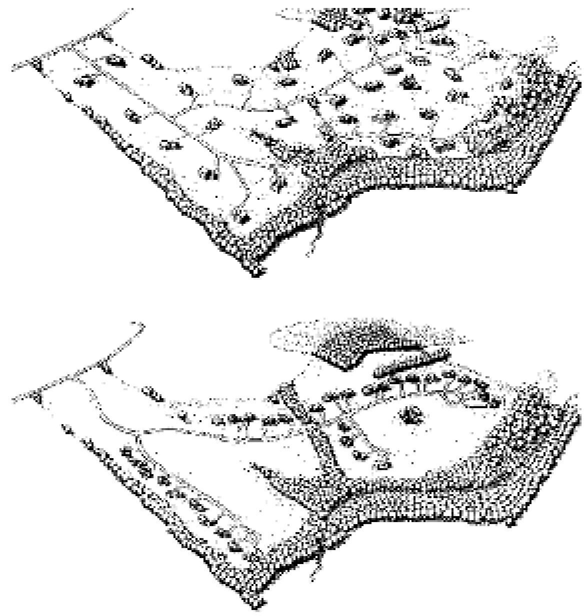
Open Space Design

Postconstruction Storm Water Management in New Development and Redevelopment

Description

Open space design, also known as conservation development or cluster development, is a better site design technique that concentrates dwelling units in a compact area in one portion of the development site in exchange for providing open space and natural areas elsewhere on the site. The minimum lot sizes, setbacks and frontage distances for the residential zone are relaxed in order to create the open space at the site. Open space designs have many benefits in comparison to the conventional subdivisions that they replace: they can reduce impervious cover, storm water pollutants, construction costs, grading, and the loss of natural areas. However, many communities lack zoning ordinances to permit open space development, and even those that have enacted ordinances might need to revise them to achieve greater water quality and environmental benefits.



A site developed using open space design principles (bottom) maintains more undeveloped common space than the conventional development plan (top) (Source: Arendt, 1996)

The benefits of open space design can be amplified when it is combined with other better site design techniques such as narrow streets, open channels, and alternative turnarounds (see Narrower Residential Streets, Eliminating Curbs and Gutters, and Alternative Turnarounds).

Applicability

The codes and ordinances that govern residential development in many communities do not allow developers to build anything other than conventional subdivisions. Consequently, it may be necessary to enact a new ordinance or revise current development regulations to enable developers to pursue this design option. Model ordinances and regulations for open space design can be found on http://www.cwp.org and in *Better Site Design: A Handbook for Changing Development Rules in Your Community* (CWP, 1998).

Open space design is widely applicable to most forms of residential development. The greatest storm water and pollutant reduction benefits typically occur when open space design is applied to residential zones that have larger lots (less than two dwelling units per acre). In these types of large lot zones, a great deal of natural or community open space can be created by shrinking lot sizes. However, open space design may not always be a viable option for high-density residential zones, redevelopment, or infill development, where lots are small to begin with and clustering will yield little open space. In rural areas, open space design may need to be adapted, especially in communities where shared septic fields are not currently allowed by public health authorities.

Open space design can be employed in nearly all geographic regions of the country, with the result of different types of open space being conserved (forest, prairie, farmland, chaparral, or desert).

Siting and Design Conditions

Several site planning techniques have been proposed for designing effective open space developments (Arendt, 1996, and DE DNREC, 1997). Often, a necessary first step is adoption of a local ordinance that allows open space design within conventional residential zones. Such ordinances specify more flexible and smaller lot sizes, setbacks, and frontage distances for the residential zone, as well as minimum requirements for open space and natural area conservation. Other key elements of effective open space ordinances include requirements for the consolidation and use of open space, as well as enforceable provisions for managing the open space on a common basis.

Limitations

A number of real and perceived barriers hinder wider acceptance of open space designs by developers, local governments, and the general public. For example, despite strong evidence to the contrary, some developers still feel that open space designs are less marketable than conventional residential subdivisions. In other cases, developers contend that the review process for open space design is more lengthy, costly, and potentially controversial than that required for conventional subdivisions, and thus, not worth the trouble.

Local governments may be concerned that homeowner associations lack the financial resources, liability insurance, or technical competence to maintain open space adequately. Finally, the general public is often suspicious of cluster or open space development proposals, feeling that they are a "Trojan Horse" for more intense development, traffic, and other local concerns. At the regional level, open space design policies and ordinances need to be carefully constructed and implemented so as not to lead to "leap-frogging," which is the creation of additional development in already built-up areas. An open space development that requires new infrastructure, such as roads, water and sewer lines, and commercial areas, can actually create more imperviousness at the regional level than it saves at the site level.

In reality, many of these misconceptions can be directly addressed through a clear open space ordinance and by providing training and incentives to the development and engineering community. The Natural Resources Defense Council presents several examples of successful conservation-oriented developments in *Stormwater Strategies: Community Responses to Runoff Pollution* (1999).

Maintenance Considerations

Once established, common open space and natural conservation areas must be managed by a responsible party able to maintain the areas in a natural state in perpetuity. Typically, the open space is protected by legally enforceable deed restrictions, conservation easements, and maintenance agreements. In most communities, the authority for managing open space falls to a homeowner or community association or a land trust. Annual maintenance tasks for open space managed as natural areas are almost non-existent, and the annual maintenance cost for managing an acre of natural area is less than $75 (CWP, 1998). It may be useful to develop a habitat plan for natural areas that may require periodic management actions.

Effectiveness

Recent redesign research indicates that open space design can provide impressive pollutant reduction benefits compared to the conventional subdivisions they replace. For example, the Center for Watershed Protection (1998) reported that nutrient export declined by 45 percent to 60 percent when two conventional subdivisions were redesigned as open space subdivisions. Other researchers have reported similar levels of pollutant reductions when conventional subdivisions were replaced by open space subdivisions (Maurer, 1996; DE DNREC, 1997; Dreher and Price, 1994; and SCCCL, 1995). In all cases, the reduction in pollutants was due primarily to the sharp drop in runoff caused by the lower impervious cover associated with open space subdivisions. In the redesign studies cited above, impervious cover declined by an average of 34 percent when open space designs were utilized.

Along with reduced imperviousness, open space designs provide a host of other environmental benefits lacking in most conventional designs. These developments reduce potential pressure to encroach on resource and buffer areas because enough open space is usually reserved to accommodate resource protection areas. As less land is cleared during the construction process, the potential for soil erosion is also greatly diminished. Perhaps most importantly, open space design reserves 25 to 50 percent of the development site in green space that would not otherwise be protected, preserving a greater range of landscapes and habitat "islands" that can support considerable diversity in mammals, songbirds, and other wildlife.

Cost Considerations

Open space developments can be significantly less expensive to build than conventional subdivisions. Most of the cost savings are due to savings in road building and storm water management conveyance costs. In fact, the use of open space design techniques at a residential development in Davis, California, provided an estimated infrastructure construction costs savings of $800 per home (Liptan and Brown, 1996). Other examples demonstrate infrastructure costs savings ranging from 11 to 66 percent. Table 1 lists some of the projected construction cost savings generated by the use of open space redesign at several residential sites.

While open space developments are frequently less expensive to build, developers find that these properties often command higher prices than homes in more conventional developments. Several regional studies estimate that residential properties in open space developments garner premiums that are 5 to 32 percent higher than conventional subdivisions and moreover, sell or lease at an increased rate. In Massachusetts, cluster developments were found to appreciate 12 percent faster than conventional subdivisions over a 20-year period (Lacey and Arendt, 1990). In Atlanta, Georgia, the presence of trees and natural areas measurably increased the residential property tax base (Anderson and Cordell, 1982).

Table 1. Projected construction cost savings for open space designs from redesign analyses

Residential Development	Construction Savings	Notes
Remlik Hall [1]	52%	Includes costs for engineering, road construction, and obtaining water and sewer permits
Duck Crossing [2]	12%	Includes roads, storm water management, and reforestation
Tharpe Knoll [3]	56%	Includes roads and storm water management
Chapel Run [3]	64%	Includes roads, storm water management, and reforestation
Pleasant Hill [3]	43%	Includes roads, storm water management, and reforestation
Rapahannock [2]	20%	Includes roads, storm water management, and reforestation
Buckingham Greene [3]	63%	Includes roads and storm water management
Canton, Ohio[4]	66%	Includes roads and storm water management

Sources: [1] Maurer, 1996; [2] CWP, 1998; [3] DE DNREC, 1997; [4] NAHB, 1986

In addition to being aesthetically pleasing, the reduced impervious cover and increased tree canopy associated with open space development reduce the size and cost of downstream storm water treatment facilities. The resulting cost savings can be considerable, as the cost to treat the quality and quantity of storm water from a single impervious acre can range from $2,000 to a staggering $50,000. The increased open space within a cluster development also provides a greater range of locations for more cost-effective storm water practices. Clearly, open space developments are valuable from an economic as well as an environmental standpoint.

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