

FAIRFAX COUNTY STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Private Stormwater Management Facilities

An Overview of Fairfax County's
Stormwater Management Program



Fairfax County's Stormwater Program

We are all responsible for protecting Fairfax County's streams from pollution carried by "stormwater runoff." The County's robust stormwater management program controls flooding and pollution of our streams from stormwater runoff and also meets obligations under federal, state and regional regulations. But the County cannot implement its stormwater program without your help.

This brochure describes the important role that private stormwater management (SWM) facilities play in the County's overall stormwater management program and describes your responsibilities as the owner of a SWM facility. By ensuring your stormwater facility is maintained and functioning properly, you can help prevent serious flooding problems and protect the health of our local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

Stormwater Management

Land left in a natural condition ("pervious surfaces" such as fields and woods) soaks up rain and snow melt. However, when land is covered with buildings, roads and parking lots, the rain and snow melt runs over these "impervious surfaces" picking up everything in its path (e.g., litter, grass clippings, oil and animal waste). This "stormwater runoff" then carries these pollutants into storm drains and directly to the nearest stream. Uncontrolled quantities of stormwater runoff can cause flooding of neighborhoods in low-lying areas.

Stormwater runoff is a major cause of pollution in local streams and the Chesapeake Bay and contributes significantly to localized flooding. It is the number one cause of poor water quality in streams and rivers in Fairfax County. The County is responsible for managing stormwater quality and quantity to protect neighborhoods and our streams.

Public and private stormwater management facilities help reduce the stormwater impact on our streams by reducing pollutants in the stormwater and slowing the flow of runoff.

Almost two-thirds of the County's SWM facilities are maintained and/or owned by private property owners (e.g., businesses, homeowners' associations or private residents). Therefore, the County cannot implement a successful stormwater management program without the critical involvement of those who own and maintain these private stormwater management facilities.

STORMWATER RUNOFF

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Stormwater Management Facilities

The term “stormwater management facilities” encompasses a wide range of structures that are designed to reduce the speed of stormwater runoff and provide time for most pollutants to settle in a holding area where they will not be transported to streams.

Although not wholly encompassing of the entire inventory, the most common types of SWM facilities found in residential and commercial settings include:

- Dry and wet ponds
- Infiltration trenches
- Bioretention (rain gardens)
- Underground vaults, sandfilters and manufactured devices

Why Do I Have a Stormwater Management Facility on My Property?

Your property likely has a private stormwater management facility because it was constructed as a condition for developing the site. When a private SWM facility is constructed as a development condition, the developer (or owner) signs a legal agreement with the County to ensure that the stormwater facility is maintained and continues to function properly. The private maintenance agreement (PMA) conveys with the sale of the land and becomes part of the deed. Therefore, anyone who owns the property is bound by the agreement and is responsible for upkeep of the storm water facility. Additionally, property owners are encouraged to provide all maintenance and inspection records to future owners upon sale of the property. Passing along your information package keeps the new owner informed and armed with the tools needed to help keep the facility functioning.

How Do I Maintain My SWM Facility?

Specific maintenance activities depend on the type of SWM facility you own. However, in most cases, homeowners can perform the maintenance and any necessary repairs on their own. Maintenance may include removing debris or weeds or replanting vegetation in accordance with the original plans. Just like changing the oil in your car, routine maintenance of your stormwater facility can avoid problems and prevent larger and potentially more expensive maintenance or repairs in the future.

You may also hire a contractor to perform the routine maintenance. As a courtesy to owners of private SWM facilities, Fairfax County maintains a list of contractors who have completed a County-sponsored Stormwater Facility Maintenance Awareness Training program. The County does not endorse any of these listed contractors, nor does the list encompass all possible companies qualified to perform this type of work. The list is included in your information package and can also be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/maintenance/. Please visit our website often for updated information.

MAINTENANCE
may include
removing
debris or weeds
or replanting
vegetation
in accordance
with the
original plans.



A Fairfax County, VA,
publication, March 2017

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TO REQUEST THIS INFORMATION IN AN ALTERNATE FORMAT, CALL MSMD AT 703-877-2800, TTY 711

The Maintenance and Stormwater Management Division (MSMD) is a division of the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services. MSMD is responsible for ensuring that stormwater management facilities are regularly maintained and performing their water quality and/or quantity functions.

As part of Fairfax County's stormwater management program, MSMD staff inspect stormwater management facilities to ensure proper maintenance is performed and that the facility is functioning according to the approved design. The County performs maintenance inspections of stormwater management facilities to meet regulatory requirements as well as to practice good environmental stewardship.