BOX 5-3
Recommended Construction Stormwater Control Measures

1. As the top priority, emphasize construction management SCMs as follows:
- Maintain existing vegetation cover, if it exists, as long as possible.
- Perform ground-disturbing work in the season with smaller risk of erosion, and work off disturbed ground in the higher risk season.
- Limit ground disturbance to the amount that can be effectively controlled in the event of rain.
- Use natural depressions and planning excavation to drain runoff internally and isolate areas of potential sediment and other pollutant generation from draining off the site, so long as safe in large storms.
- Schedule and coordinate rough grading, finish grading, and erosion control application to be completed in the shortest possible time overall and with the shortest possible lag between these work activities.

2. Stabilize with cover appropriate to site conditions, season, and future work plans. For example:
- Rapidly stabilize disturbed areas that could drain off the site, and that will not be worked again, with permanent vegetation supplemented with highly effective temporary erosion controls until achievement of at least 90 percent vegetative soil cover.
- Rapidly stabilize disturbed areas that could drain off the site, and that will not be worked again for more than three days, with highly effective temporary erosion controls.
- If at least 0.1 inch of rain is predicted with a probability of 40 percent or more, before rain falls stabilize or isolate disturbed areas that could drain off the site, and that are being actively worked or will be within three days, with measures that will prevent or minimize transport of sediment off the property.

3. As backup for cases where all of the above measures are used to the maximum extent possible but sediments still could be released from the site, consider the need for sediment collection systems including, but not limited to, conventional settling ponds and advanced sediment collection devices such as polymer-assisted sedimentation and advanced sand filtration.

4. Specify emergency stabilization and/or runoff collection (e.g., using temporary depressions) procedures for areas of active work when rain is forecast.

5. If runoff can enter storm drains, use a perimeter control strategy as backup where some soil exposure will still occur, even with the best possible erosion control (above measures) or when there is discharge to a sensitive waterbody.

6. Specify flow control SCMs to prevent or minimize to the extent possible:
- Flow of relatively clean off-site water over bare soil or potentially contaminated areas;
- Flow of relatively clean intercepted groundwater over bare soil or potentially contaminated areas;
- High velocities of flow over relatively steep and/or long slopes, in excess of what erosion control coverings can withstand; and
- Erosion of channels by concentrated flows, by using channel lining, velocity control, or both.

7. Specify stabilization of construction entrance and exit areas, provision of a nearby tire and chassis wash for dirty vehicles leaving the site with a wash water sediment trap, and a sweeping plan.

8. Specify construction road stabilization.

9. Specify wind erosion control.

10. Prevent contact between rainfall or runoff and potentially polluting construction materials, processes, wastes, and vehicle and equipment fluids by such measures as enclosures, covers, and containments, as well as berming to direct runoff.

BOX 5-4
Receiving Water Impacts Associated with Construction Site Discharges

The following is a summary of a recent research project that investigated in-stream biological conditions downstream of construction sites having varying levels of erosion controls (none, the use of filter fences, and filter fences plus grass buffers) for comparison. The project title is *Studies to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Current BMPs in Controlling Stormwater Discharges from Small Construction Sites* and was conducted for the Alabama Water Resources Research Institute, Project 2001AL4121B, by Drs. Robert Angus, Ken Marion, and Melinda Lalor of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. The initial phase of the project, described below, was completed in 2002. While this case study is felt to be representative of many sites across the United States, there are other examples of where silt fences have been observed to be more effective (e.g., Barrett et al., 1998).

Methods

This study was conducted in the upper Cahaba River watershed in north central Alabama, near Birmingham. The study areas had the following characteristics. (1) Topography and soil types representative of the upland physiographic regions in the Southeast (i.e., southern Appalachian and foothill areas); thus, findings from this study should be relevant to a large portion of the Southeast. (2) The rainfall amounts and intensities in this region are representative of many areas of the Southeast and (3) the expanding suburbs of the Birmingham metropolitan area are rapidly encroaching upon the upper Cahaba River and its tributaries. Stormwater runoff samples were manually collected from sheet flows above silt fences, and from points below the fence within the vegetated buffer. Water was sampled during "intense" (≥1 inch/hour) rain events. The runoff samples were analyzed for turbidity, particle size distribution (using a Coulter Counter Multi-Sizer IIe), and total solids (dissolved solids plus suspended/non-filterable solids). Sampling was only carried out on sites with properly installed and well-maintained silt fences, located immediately upgrade from areas with good vegetative cover.

Six tributary or upper mainstream sites were studied to investigate the effects of sedimentation from construction sites on both habitat quality and the biological "health" of the aquatic ecosystem (using benthic macroinvertebrates and fish). EPA's Revision to Rapid Bioassessment Protocols for Use in Streams and Rivers was used to assess the habitat quality at the study sites. Each site was assessed in the spring to evaluate immediate effects of the sediment, and again during the following late summer or early fall to evaluate delayed effects.

Results

Effectiveness of Silt Fences. Silt fences were found to be better than no control measures at all, but not substantially. The mean counts of small particles (<5 μm) below the silt fences were about 50 percent less than that from areas with no erosion control measures, even though the fences appeared to be properly installed and in good order. However, the variabilities were large and the difference between the means was not statistically significant. For every variable measured, the mean values of samples taken below silt fences were significantly higher ($p < 0.001$) than samples collected from undisturbed vegetated control sites collected nearby and at the same time. These data therefore indicate that silt fences are only marginally effective at reducing soil particulates in runoff water.

Effectiveness of Filter Fences with Vegetated Buffers. Runoff samples were also collected immediately below filter fences, and below filter fences after flow over buffers having 5, 10, and 15 feet of dense (intact) vegetation. Mean total solids in samples collected below silt fences and a 15-foot-wide vegetated buffer zone were about 20 percent lower, on average, than those samples collected only below the silt fence. The installation of filter fences above an intact, good vegetated buffer removes sediment from construction site runoff more effectively than with the use of filter fences alone.

continues next page

BOX 5-4 Continued

Biological Metrics Sensitive to Sedimentation Effects (Fish). Analysis of the fish biota indicates that various metrics used to evaluate the biological integrity of the fish community also are affected by highly sedimented streams. As shown in Figure 5-12, the overall composition of the population, as quantified by the Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) is lower; the proportion and biomass of darters, a disturbance-sensitive group, is lower; the proportion and biomass of sunfish is higher; the Shannon-Weiner diversity index is lower; and the number of disturbance-tolerant species is higher as mean sediment depth increases.

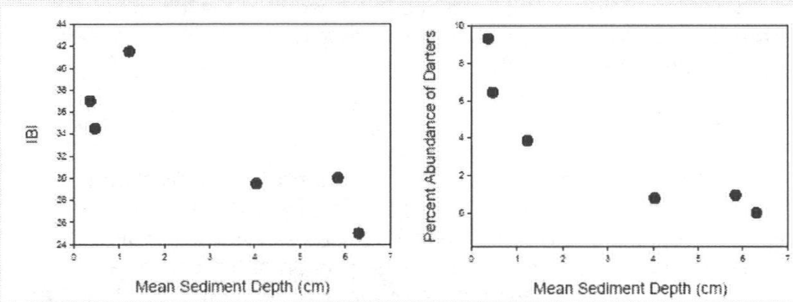


FIGURE 5-12 Association between two fish metrics and amount of stream sediment. NOTE: The IBI is based on numerous characteristics of the fish population. The percent relative abundance of darters is the percentage of darters to all the fish collected at a site. SOURCE: Alabama WRRI.

Benthic Macroinvertebrates. A number of stream benthic macroinvertebrate community characteristics were also found to be sensitive to sedimentation. Metrics based on these characteristics differ greatly between sediment-impacted and control sites (Figure 5-13). Some of the metrics that appear to reflect sediment-associated stresses include the Hilsenhoff Biotic Index (HBI), a variation of the EPT index (percent EPT minus Baetis), and the Sorensen Index of Similarity to a reference site. The HBI is a weighted mean tolerance value; high HBI values indicate sites dominated by disturbance-tolerant macroinvertebrate taxa. The EPT% index is the percent of the collection represented by organisms in the generally disturbance-sensitive orders *Ephemeroptera, Plecoptera,* and *Trichoptera*. Specimens of the genus *Baetis* were not included in the index as they are relatively disturbance-tolerant. The HBI and the EPT indices also show positive correlations to several other measures of disturbance, such as percent of the watershed altered by development.

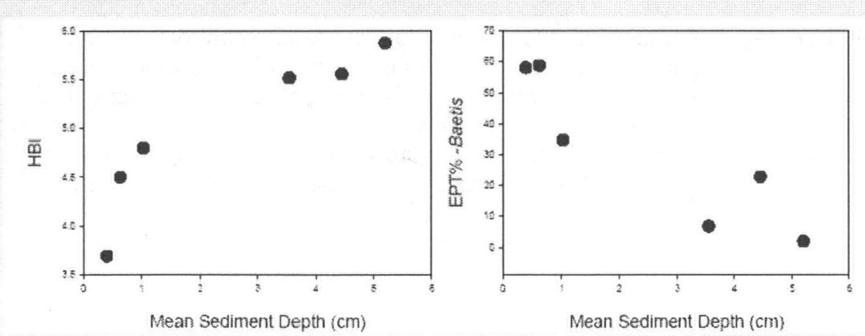


FIGURE 5-13 Associations between two macroinvertebrate metrics and the amount of stream sediment. SOURCE: Alabama WRRI.

Reforestation and Soil Compost Amendments

This set of practices seeks to improve the quality of native vegetation and soils present at the site. Depending on the ecoregion, this may involve forest, prairie, or chapparal plantings, tilling, and amending compacted soils to improve their hydrologic properties.

The goal is to maintain as much predevelopment hydrologic function at a development site as possible by retaining canopy interception, duff/soil layer interception, evapotranspiration, and surface infiltration. The basic methods to implement this practice are described in Cappiella et al. (2006), Pitt et al. (2005), Chollak and Rosenfeld (1998), and Balusek (2003).

At this time, there are few monitoring data to assess the degree to which land reforestation or soil amendments can improve the quality of stormwater runoff at a particular development site, apart from the presumptive watershed research that has shown that forests with undisturbed soils have very low rates of surface runoff and extremely low levels of pollutants in runoff (Singer and Rust, 1975; Johnson et al., 2000; Chang, 2006). More data are needed on the hydrologic properties of urban forests and soils whose ecological functions are stressed or degraded by the urbanization process (Pouyat et al., 1995, 2007).

Pollution Prevention SCMs for Stormwater Hotspots

Certain classes of municipal and industrial operations are required to maintain a series of pollution prevention practices to prevent or minimize contact of pollutants with rainfall and runoff. Pollution prevention practices involve a wide range of operational practices at a site related to vehicle repairs, fueling, washing and storage, loading and unloading areas, outdoor storage of materials, spill prevention and response, building repair and maintenance, landscape and turf management, and other activities that can introduce pollutants into the stormwater system (CWP, 2005). Training of personnel at the affected area is needed to ensure that industrial and municipal managers and employees understand and implement the correct stormwater pollution prevention practices needed for their site or operation.

Examples of municipal operations that may need pollution prevention plans include public works yards, landfills, wastewater treatment plants, recycling and solid waste transfer stations, maintenance depots, school bus and fleet storage and maintenance areas, public golf courses, and ongoing highway maintenance operations. The major industrial categories that require stormwater pollution prevention plans were described in Table 2-3. Both industrial and municipal operations must develop a detailed stormwater pollution prevention plan, train employees, and submit reports to regulators. Compliance has been a significant issue with this program in the past, particularly for small businesses (Duke and Augustenberg, 2006; Cross and Duke, 2008) Recently filed investigations of stormwater hotspots indicate many of these operations are not fully implementing their stormwater pollution prevention plans, and a recent GAO report (2007) indicates that state inspections and enforcement actions are extremely rare.

The goal of pollution prevention is to prevent contact of rainfall or stormwater runoff with pollutants, and it is an important element of the post-construction stormwater plan. However, with the exception of a few industries such as auto salvage yards (Swamikannu, 1994), basic research is lacking on how much greater event mean concentrations are at municipal and industrial stormwater hotspots compared to other urban land uses. In addition, little is presently known about whether aggressive implementation of stormwater pollution prevention plans actually can reduce stormwater pollutant concentrations at hot spots.

Runoff Volume Reduction—Rainwater Harvesting

A primary goal of stormwater management is to reduce the volume of runoff from impervious surfaces. There are several classes of SCMs that can achieve this goal, including rainwater harvesting systems, vegetated SCMs that evapotranspirate part of the volume, and infiltration SCMs. For all of these measures, the amount of runoff volume to be captured depends on watershed goals, site conditions including climate, upstream nonstructural practices employed, and whether the chosen SCM is the sole management measure or part of a treatment train. Generally, runoff-volume-reduction SCMs are designed to handle at least the first flush from impervious surfaces (1 inch of rainfall). In Pennsylvania, control of the 24-hour, two-year storm volume (about 8 cm) is considered the standard necessary to protect stream-channel geomorphology, while base flow recharge and the first flush can be addressed by capturing a much smaller volume of rain (1–3 cm). Where both goals must be met, the designer is permitted to either oversize the volume reduction device to control the larger volume, or build a smaller device and use it in series with an extended detention basin to protect the stream geomorphology (PaDEP, 2006). Some designers have reported that in areas with medium to lower percentage impervious surfaces they are able to control up to the 100-year storm by enlarging runoff-volume-reduction SCMs and using the entire site. In retrofit situations, capture amounts as small as 1 cm are a distinct improvement. It should be noted that there are important, although indirect, water quality benefits of all runoff-volume-reduction SCMs—(1) the reduction in runoff will reduce streambank erosion downstream and the concomitant increases in sediment load, and (2) volume reductions lead to pollutant load reductions, even if pollutant concentrations in stormwater are not decreased.

Rainwater harvesting systems refer to use of captured runoff from roof tops in rain barrels, tanks, or cisterns (Figures 5-14 and 5-15). This SCM treats runoff as a resource and is one of the few SCMs that can provide a tangible economic benefit through the reduction of treated water usage. Rainwater harvesting systems have substantial potential as retrofits via the use of rain barrels or cisterns that can replace lawn or garden sprinkling systems. Use of this SCM to provide gray water within buildings (e.g., for toilet flushing) is considerably more complicated due to the need to construct new plumbing and obtain the necessary permits.

The greatest challenge with these systems is the need to use the stored water and avoid full tanks, since these cannot be responsive in the event of a storm. That is, these SCMs are effective only if the captured runoff can be regularly used for some grey water usage, like car washing, toilet flushing, or irrigation systems (golf courses, landscaping, nurseries). In some areas it might be possible to use the water for drinking, showering, or washing, but treatment to potable water quality would be required. Sizing of the required storage is dependent on the climate patterns, the amount of impervious cover, and the frequency of water use. Areas with frequent rainfall events require less storage as long as the water is used regularly, while areas with cold weather will not be able to utilize the systems for irrigation in the winter and thus require larger storage.

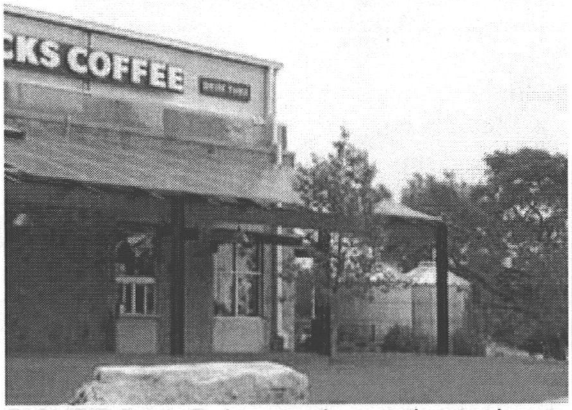


FIGURE 5-14 Rainwater harvesting tanks at a Starbucks in Austin, Texas. SOURCE: Laura Ehlers.

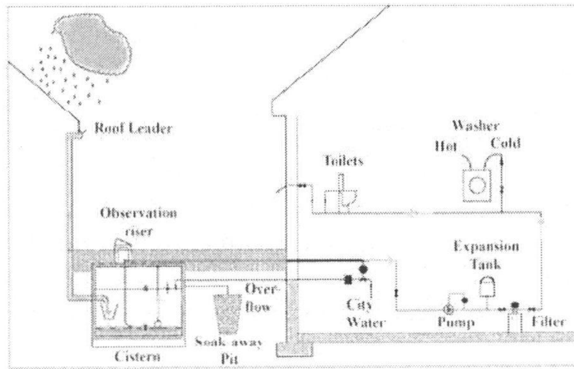


FIGURE 5-15 A Schematic of rainwater harvesting . SOURCE: PaDEP (2006).

One substantial advantage of these systems is their ability to reduce water costs for the user and the ability to share needs. An example of this interaction is the Pelican Hill development in Irvine, California, where excess runoff from the streets and houses is collected in enormous cisterns and used for watering of a nearby golf course. Furthermore, compared to other SCMs, the construction of rainwater harvesting facilities provide a long-term benefit with minimal maintenance cost, although they do require an upfront investment for piping and storage tanks.

Coombes et al. (2000) found that rainwater harvesting achieved a 60 to 90 percent reduction in runoff volume; in general, few studies have been conducted to determine the performance of these SCMs. It should be noted that rainwater harvesting systems do collect airborne deposition and acid rain.

Runoff Volume Reduction—Vegetated

A large and very promising class of SCMs includes those that use infiltration and evapotranspiration via vegetation to reduce the volume of runoff. These SCMs also directly address water quality of both surface water and groundwater by reducing streambank erosion, capturing suspended solids, and removing other pollutants from stormwater during filtration through the soil (although the extent to which pollutants are removed depends on the specific pollutant and the local soil chemistry). Depending on their design, these SCMs can also reduce peak flows and recharge groundwater (if they infiltrate). These SCMs can often be added as retrofits to developed areas by installing them into existing lawns, rights of way, or traffic islands. They can add beauty and property value.

Flow volume is addressed by this SCM group by first capturing runoff, creating a temporary holding area, and then removing the stored volume through infiltration and evapotranspiration. Examples include bioswales, bioretention, rain gardens, green roofs, and bioinfiltration. Swales refer to grassy areas on the side of the road that convey drainage. These were first designed to move runoff away from paved areas, but can now be designed to achieve a certain contact time with runoff so as to promote infiltration and pollutant removal (see Figure 5-

16). Bioretention generally refers to a constructed sand filter with soil and vegetation growing on top to which stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces is directed (Figure 5-17). The original rain garden or bioretention facilities were constructed with a fabric at the bottom of the prepared soil to prevent infiltration and instead had a low-level outflow at the bottom. Green roofs (Figure 5-18) are very similar to bioretention SCMs. They tend to be populated with a light expanded shale-type soil and succulent plants chosen to survive wet and dry periods. Finally, bioinfiltration is similar to bioretention but is better engineered to achieve greater infiltration (Figure 5-19). All of these devices are usually at the upper end of a treatment train and designed for smaller storms, which minimizes their footprint and allows for incorporation within existing infrastructure (such as traffic control devices and median strips). This allows for distributed treatment of the smaller volumes and distributed volume reduction.

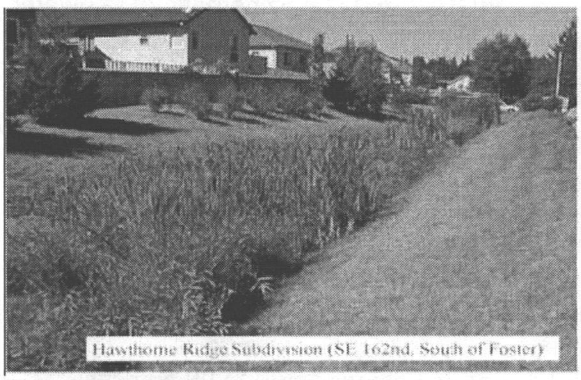


FIGURE 5-16 Vegetated swale. SOURCE: PaDEP (2006).

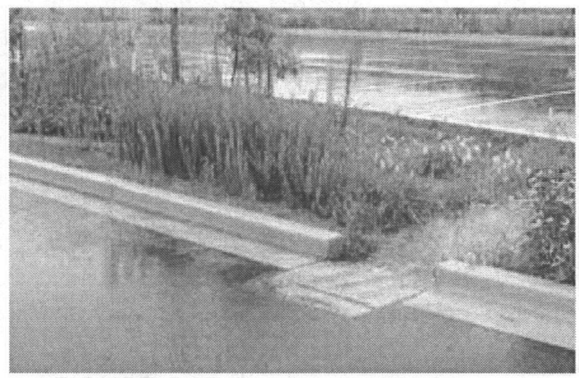


FIGURE 5-17 Bioretention during a storm event at the University of Maryland. SOURCE: Reprinted, with permission, from Davis et al. (2008). Copyright 2008 by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

FIGURE 5-18 City Hall in the center of Chicago's downtown was retrofitted with a green roof to reduce the heat island effect, remove airborne pollutants, and attenuate stormwater flows as a demonstration of innovative stormwater management in an ultra-urban setting. SOURCE: Conservation Design Forum.

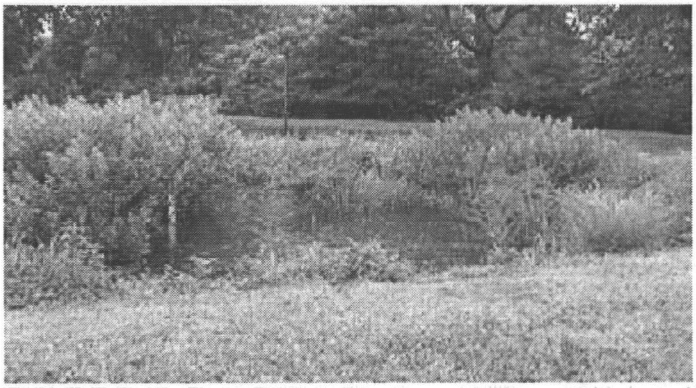


FIGURE 5-19 Retrofit bioinfiltration at Villanova University immediately following a storm event. SOURCE: Robert Traver.

These SCMs work by capturing water in a vegetated area, which then infiltrates into the soil below. They are primarily designed to use plant material and soil to evapotranspirate the runoff over several days. A shallow depth of ponding is required, since the inflows may exceed the possible infiltration ability of the native soil. This ponding is maintained above an engineered sandy soil mixture and is a surface-controlled process (Hillel, 1998). Early in the storm, the soil moisture potential creates a suction process that helps draw water into the SCM. This then changes to a steady rate that is "practically equal to the saturated hydraulic conductivity" of the subsurface (Hillel, 1998). The hydrologic design goal should be to maximize the volume of water that can be held in the soil, which necessitates consideration of the soil hydraulic conductivity (which varies with temperature), climate, depth to groundwater, and time to drain. Usually these devices are designed to empty between 24 and 72 hours after a storm event. In some cases (usually bioretention), these SCMs have an underdrain.

The choice of vegetation is an important part of the design of these SCMs. Many sites where infiltration is desirable have highly sandy soils, and the vegetation has to be able to endure both wet and dry periods. Long root growths are desired to promote infiltration (Barr Engineering Co., 2001), and plants that attract birds can reduce the insect population. Bioretention cells may be wet for longer periods than bioinfiltration sites, requiring different plants. Denser plantings or "thorns" may be needed to avoid the destruction caused by humans and animals taking shortcuts through the beds.

The pollutant removal mechanism operating for volume-reduction SCMs are different for each pollutant type, soil type, and volume-reduction mechanism. For bioretention and SCMs using infiltration, the sedimentation and filtration of suspended solids in the top layers of the soil are extremely efficient. Several studies have shown that the upper layers of the soil capture metals, particulate nutrients, and carbon (Pitt, 1996; Deschesne et al., 2005; Davis et al., 2008). The removal of dissolved nutrients from stormwater is not as straightforward. While ammonia is caught by the top organic layer, nitrate is mobile in the soil column. Some bioretention systems have been built to hold water in the soil for longer periods in order to create anaerobic conditions that would promote denitrification (Hunt and Lord, 2006a). Phosphorus removal is related to the amount of phosphorus in the original soil. Some studies have shown that bioretention cells built with agricultural soils increased the amount of phosphorus released. Chlorides pass through the system unchecked (Ermilio and Traver, 2006), while oils and greases are easily removed by the organic layer. Hunt et al. (2008) have reported in studies in North Carolina that the drying cycle appears to kill off bacteria. Temperature is not usually a concern as most storms do not overflow these devices. Green roofs collect airborne deposition and acid rain and may export nutrients when they overflow. However, this must be tempered by the fact that in larger storms, most natural lands would produce nutrients.

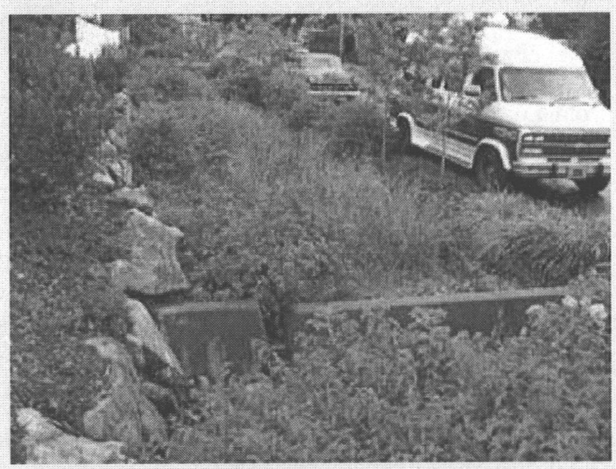
A group of new research studies from North America and Australia have demonstrated the value of many of these runoff-volume-reduction practices to replicate predevelopment hydrology at the site. The results from 11 recent studies are given in Table 5-3, which shows the runoff reduction capability of bioretention. As can be seen, the reduction in runoff volume achieved by these practices is impressive—ranging from 20 to 99 percent with a median reduction of about 75 percent. Box 5-5 discusses the excellent performance of the bioswales installed during Seattle's natural drainage systems project (see also Horner et al., 2003; Jefferies, 2004; Stagge, 2006). Bioinfiltration has been less studied, but one field study concluded that close to 30 percent of the storm volume was able to be removed by bioinfiltration (Sharkey, 2006). A very recent case study of bioinfiltration is provided in Box 5-6, which demonstrates that the capture of small storms through these SCMs is extremely effective in areas where the majority of the rainfall falls in smaller storms.

TABLE 5-3 Volumetric Runoff Reduction Achieved by Bioretention

Bioretention Design	Location	Runoff Reduction	Reference
Infiltration	CT	99%	Dietz and Clausen (2006)
	PA	86%	Ermilio and Traver (2006)
	FL	98%	Rushton (2002)
	AUS	73%	Lloyd et al. (2002)
Underdrain	ONT	40%	Van Seters et al. (2006)
	Model	30%	Perez-Perdini et al. (2005)
	NC	40 to 60%	Smith and Hunt (2007)
	NC	20 to 29%	Sharkey (2006)
	NC	52 to 56%	Hunt et al. (2008)
	NC	20 to 50%	Passeport et al. (2008)
	MD	52 to 65%	Davis et al. (2008)

BOX 5-5
Bioswale Case Study
100th Street Cascade, Seattle, Washington

A recent example of the ability of SCMs to accomplish a variety of goals was illustrated for water quality swales in Seattle, Washington. As part of its Natural Drainage Systems Project, the City of Seattle retrofitted several blocks of an urban residential neighborhood with curbside vegetated swales. On NW 110th Street, the two-block-long system was developed as a cascade, due to the steep slope (6 percent). Twelve stepped, in-series biofilters were installed between properties and the road, each of which contains a storage area and an overflow weir. During rain events, the cells were designed to fill before emptying into the cell downstream. The soils in the bottom of each cell were over one foot thick and consisted of river rocks overlain by a swale mix. Native plants were chosen to vegetate the sides of the swale.



Extensive flow and water quality sampling occurred during 2003–2006 at the inflow and outflow of the biofilters as well as at references points elsewhere in the neighborhood that are not served by the new SCMs. Perhaps the most profound observation was that almost 50 percent of all rainfall flowing into the cascade was infiltrated, resulting in a corresponding reduction in runoff. Indeed, the cascade discharged measurable flow only during 49 of 235 storm events during the period. Depending on preceding conditions, the cascade was able to retain all of the flow for storms up to 1 inch in magnitude. In addition to the reduction in runoff affected by the swales, they also achieved significant peak flow reduction, as shown in Figure 5-20. Many peak flow rates were entirely dampened, even those where the inflow peak rate was as high as 0.7 cfs.

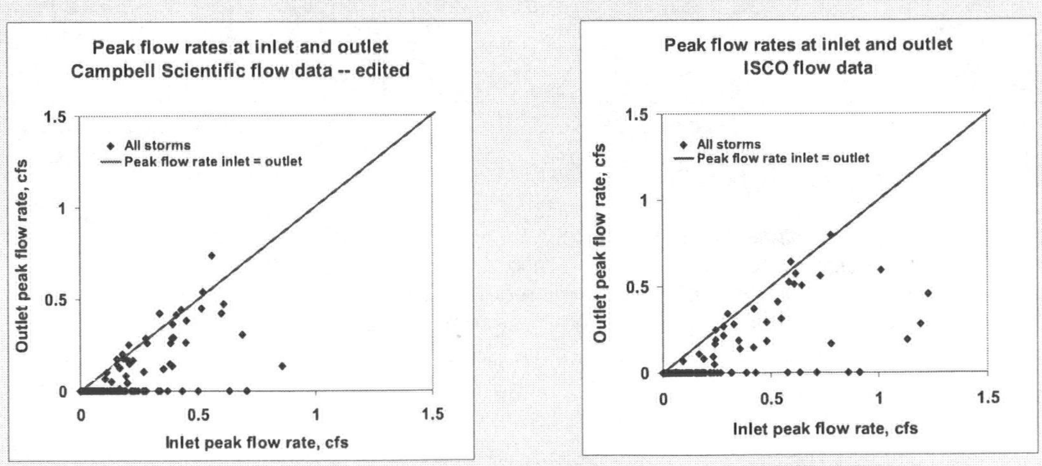


FIGURE 5-20 Peak flow rates at the inlet and outlet of the cascade, as measured by two different devices: Campbell Scientific (left) and ISCO (right). SOURCE: Horner and Chapman (2007).

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