

Stormwater Management | Stormwater Filtering Practices

FILTERING PRACTICES

Filtering practices treat stormwater runoff by capturing and passing the water quality volume through a bed of sand, other soil material, or other acceptable treatment media to remove pollutants from the water. Sediments and other pollutants are removed by physical straining and adsorption. Filtration BMPs are very effective at removing a wide range of pollutants from stormwater runoff, particularly when organic soil filter media have been used.

Filtering practices differ from infiltration practices in that the stormwater filters through an engineered filter media, rather than native soil. However, filtering practices can be constructed in combination with infiltration practices, where the filtered water is discharged into the ground beneath the BMP. Alternatively, filters can be designed with an underdrain to collect the treated water and convey it to discharge.

Filtration systems can be either surface sand filters, underground sand filters, or bioretention systems. For surface sand filters, the top surface is exposed to the elements, but kept free of vegetation. It is typically designed with a pretreatment device, such as a sedimentation chamber (wet or dry) where coarse sediments settle out of the water. Pretreated runoff then enters the sand filter, saturating the filter bed and filling temporary storage volume provided above the bed.

The underground sand filter operates in a similar fashion to the surface sand filter, except that the system is enclosed in a below-grade structure. The structure may consist of a multi-chambered vault that accommodates pretreatment, as well as the filtration component of the system. The structure is made accessible through manholes or grate openings. Typical subsurface filter systems are fully enclosed in structures. However, some systems may be designed with an open bottom in contact with native soils, allowing for infiltration to occur.



Stormwater retention and filtration system installed in the Crescent Lake watershed: shown before and immediately after a heavy rain.

BIORETENTION SYSTEM

A bioretention system (also referred to as a rain garden) is a type of filtration BMP designed to collect and filter moderate amounts of stormwater runoff using conditioned planting soil beds, gravel beds and vegetation within shallow depressions. The bioretention system may be designed with an underdrain, to collect treated water and convey it to discharge, or it may be designed to infiltrate the treated water directly to the subsoil. Bioretention cells are capable of reducing sediment, nutrients, oil and grease, and trace metals.

The major difference between bioretention systems and other filtration systems is the use of vegetation. A typical surface sand filter is designed to be maintained with no vegetation, whereas a bioretention cell is planted with a variety of shrubs and perennials whose roots assist with pollutant uptake. The use of vegetation allows these systems to blend in with other landscaping features.

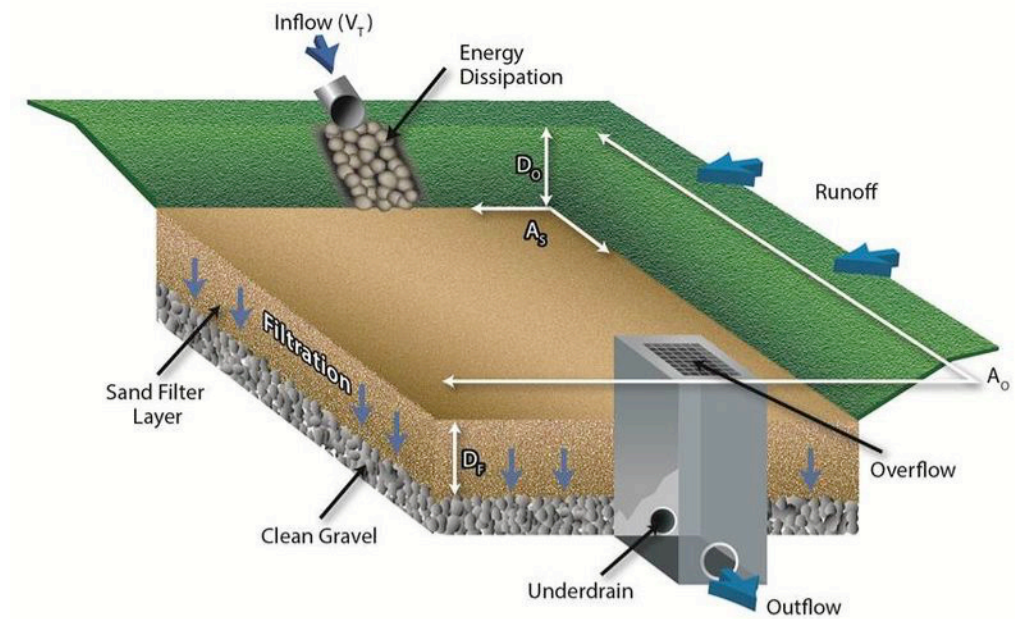


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