

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT GUIDEBOOK



**Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Land and Water Management Division**



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**Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Land and Water Management Division**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Currently, the lack of standard stormwater-management practices within Michigan can result in facilities that do not function properly or are counterproductive. The purpose of this guidebook is to provide a reference for state and local officials and engineering consultants on stormwater management for both water-quantity and water-quality concerns. The primary focus will be on the design of stormwater retention/detention basins. In addition, the following topics are also included:

- Stormwater-management measures
- Hydraulics
- Hydrology
- Operation & maintenance
- Financing
- Laws & Ordinances relating to stormwater management

The guidebook also includes a reference listing sources of additional information on stormwater management.

It is not the intent of this guidebook to recommend design practices that will be used statewide, under all circumstances, or in all communities. Instead, the guidebook is intended to be used as a reference when considering solutions to specific problems, as it discusses what is being done in stormwater management throughout the country.

DEFINITIONS

Acre-foot - a volume of water 1 foot deep and 1 acre in area, or 43,560 cubic feet.

Aerator - a device that sprays water into the air, bubbles air through the water, or agitates the water, to incorporate oxygen into the water.

Antecedent Moisture Condition (AMC) - the quantity of moisture present in the soil at the beginning of a rainfall event. The Natural Resources Conservation Service has three classifications, AMC I, II, and III.

Backwater - the increased depth of water upstream of an obstruction, such as a dam or bridge, in the stream channel.

Base Flow - the part of the stream flow that is not due to direct runoff from precipitation; it is usually supported by water draining from natural storage in groundwater bodies, lakes, or wetlands.

Bedload - the sediment in a stream channel that moves by sliding, rolling, or skipping on or near the stream bottom.

Best Management Practice (BMP) - a practice or combination of practices that form an effective, practicable means of preventing or reducing the amount of pollution generated by non-point sources.

Bottomland - the land of a lake or stream which lies below the ordinary high-water mark of the lake or stream.

Culvert - a closed conduit used for the passage of surface water under a road or other embankment.

Curve Number - see runoff-curve number.

Detention Basin - temporarily stores water before discharging into a surface-water body. Primarily used to reduce flood peaks. Can be classified into three groups:

1. Dry Detention Basin - usually dry except for short periods following large rainstorms or snowmelt events. Not effective at removing pollutants. Pollutants that may settle in the basin will be "picked up" by future floods.
2. Extended Dry Detention Basin - is a dry detention basin that has been modified to increase the time which the stormwater will be detained in the basin. The typical detention time is 24 to 48 hours. Not effective at removing nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen, unless a shallow marsh at the outlet is incorporated into the design.
3. Wet Detention Pond - a detention basin that contains a permanent pool of water that will effectively remove nutrients in addition to other pollutants.

Detention Time - the amount of time that a volume of water will remain in the detention basin.

Discharge - the rate of flow (volume of water passing a point in a given period of time). Usually expressed as cubic feet per second.

Drainage Area - the area of a watershed usually expressed in square miles or acres.

Drainage Divide - the line which follows the ridges and high points of the ground surface that separate one drainage basin from another.

Emergency Spillway - a depression in the embankment of a pond or basin which is used to pass peak discharges in excess of the design storm.

Eutrophication - the process of enrichment of water bodies by plant nutrients which may lead to increased growth of algae or rooted plants.

First Flush - highly concentrated pollutant loading during the early portion of stormwater runoff due to the rapid runoff of accumulated pollutants.

Forebay - an extra storage area provided near the inlet to a detention basin to trap incoming sediments before they accumulate in the basin.

Hydraulic Radius - the area of the culvert or stream section divided by wetted perimeter (A/WP).

Hydrograph - a graph, usually of discharge or stage versus time, at a given point along a stream.

Hydrologic Cycle - the continuous process of the exchange of water between the earth and the atmosphere.

Impervious - a surface through which little or no water will move. Impervious areas include paved parking lots and roof tops.

Infiltration - the absorption of water into the ground.

Infiltration Capacity - the maximum rate at which the soil can absorb falling rain or melting snow. Usually expressed in inches/hour or centimeters/second.

In-line Detention - the detention is provided within the flow-carrying network (stream) .

Manning's Roughness Coefficient ("n") - a coefficient used in Manning's equation to describe the resistance to flow due to the roughness of a culvert or stream channel.

Mean Storm - over a long period of years, the average rainfall event, usually expressed in inches.

Mean Storm Volume - the runoff volume produced by the "mean storm."

Moisture Content - see antecedent moisture condition.

Non-Point Source Pollution - pollution that is not identifiable to one particular source, and is occurring at locations scattered throughout the drainage basin. Typical sources include erosion, agricultural activities, and urban runoff.

Off-Line Detention - detention placed outside of the natural watercourse or storm sewer system.

Off-Site Detention - detention is provided at a regional detention facility as opposed to storage on site.

One-Hundred-Year Flood (100-year flood) - the flood that has a 1-percent chance of occurring any given year.

On-Site Detention - stormwater is detained on the property as opposed to a regional site.

Ordinary High Water - marks the line between upland and bottomland which persists through successive changes in water level, below which the presence of water is so common or recurrent that the character of the soil and vegetation is markedly different from the upland.

Orifice - an opening in a wall or a plate.

Peak Discharge - the maximum instantaneous rate of flow during a storm.

Pervious - a surface that will allow water to infiltrate into the ground.

Pilot Channel - a channel that routes runoff through a detention basin to prevent erosion of the basin.

Point-Source Pollution - pollution that occurs at a specific location, such as an outlet pipe, and is usually continuous.

Precipitation - the supply of water received from the atmosphere, such as rain, snow, and hail.

Rating Curve - a curve that expresses a relationship between dependent quantities. Typically the graph will plot stage (elevation) versus discharge.

Regression Analysis - independent variables (such as drainage area and precipitation) are selected which relate to a dependent variable (discharge). Once an equation is developed, a discharge may be computed by knowing the independent variables. Such an analysis has been developed based on an evaluation of the stream gaging stations throughout Michigan.

Retention Pond - a stormwater management practice that captures stormwater runoff and does not discharge directly to a surface water body. The water is "discharged" by infiltration or evaporation.

Retrofit - to modify an existing structure to improve the pollutant-removal or flood-peak-reduction capability.

Riser - a vertical pipe attached to the outlet pipe of a detention basin that is used to control the discharge rate from the basin.

Routing - the derivation of an outflow hydrograph for a given reach of stream or detention pond from known inflow characteristics. The procedure uses storage and discharge relationships and/or wave velocity.

Runoff - the excess portion of precipitation that does not infiltrate into the ground, but "runs off" and reaches a stream, water body, or storm drain.

Runoff-Curve Number - indicates the runoff potential of a parcel and is based on soil group and land use. The higher the runoff-curve number, the higher the runoff potential.

Sediment - material that is being transported from its site of origin by water. May be in the form of bedload (along the bed), bouncing along the bed, suspended or dissolved.

Short Circuiting - the runoff does not spend enough time in a detention facility to remove the pollutants for which the facility was designed to remove.

Stormwater Utility - a source of funding the construction and maintenance of stormwater management facilities. User fees are typically charged based on the amount of runoff that may be anticipated from a property.

Swale - a slight depression or shallow ditch which can be used to convey, store, or filter runoff.

Time of Concentration - the time it takes for runoff to travel from the hydraulically farthest portion of the watershed to the design point.

Timing - the relationship in time of how runoff from sub-watersheds combines within a watershed.

Weir - a device that has a crest and some side containment, and is used to measure, regulate, or restrict flow. The amount of flow that may pass over the weir is a function of the weir geometry and upstream height of water above the crest.

Wetted Perimeter - the wetted surface of a stream (culvert) cross section which causes resistance to flow. The water-to-surface interface is a length, usually expressed in feet.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	XIV
CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND	1
HYDROLOGIC CYCLE	1
<i>Infiltration</i>	2
IMPACTS OF URBANIZATION	2
<i>Runoff Volume</i>	2
<i>Runoff Peaks</i>	3
<i>Pollutants</i>	4
NON-POINT SOURCE POLLUTION	4
<i>Point Source</i>	4
<i>Non-point Source</i>	4
<i>Best Management Practices</i>	5
<i>Pollutants & Sources</i>	7
<i>"First Flush"</i>	8
CHAPTER 2: LAWS & ORDINANCES	9
FEDERAL LEGISLATION	9
STATE LEGISLATION	9
LOCAL ORDINANCES	12
CHAPTER 3: STORMWATER MANAGEMENT MEASURES	14
DETENTION BASINS	14
<i>Dry Detention Basins</i>	14
<i>Extended Detention Basins</i>	14
<i>Wet Detention Ponds</i>	21
TYPICAL OUTLET STRUCTURE CONFIGURATION	30
CHAPTER 4: RETENTION BASINS	32
PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS WITH RETENTION BASINS	36
<i>Potential Groundwater Contamination</i>	36
<i>Sedimentation</i>	36
<i>Property Owners</i>	36
<i>Oil and Grease</i>	36
<i>Winter Freeze-up</i>	37
<i>Slope Stability</i>	37
CHAPTER 5: OTHER INFILTRATION DEVICES	38
INFILTRATION TRENCHES AND DRY WELLS	38
GRASSED (VEGETATED) SWALE	41
GRASS FILTER STRIPS	45
CHAPTER 6: WATER-QUANTITY CONSIDERATIONS	47
DESIGN STORM	47
LOCATION OF DETENTION STORAGE	47
ON-SITE DETENTION	48
REGIONAL FACILITIES	49
OFF-LINE DETENTION (OFF STREAM)	49
IN-LINE (ON STREAM)	50

CHAPTER 7: HYDROLOGY -----	52
WATERSHED DELINEATION-----	52
OVERVIEW OF HYDROLOGIC METHODS-----	54
<i>Gaged Locations - Statistical Analysis</i> -----	56
<i>Transfer Methods</i> -----	56
<i>Regression Analysis (Regional Method)</i> -----	57
<i>SCS Methodology as Adapted to Michigan by MDEQ</i> -----	57
<i>SCS Technical Release 55 (TR-55)</i> -----	57
Average Percent Impervious Area -----	58
<i>Computer Models</i> -----	58
OTHER METHODS-----	58
<i>Rational Method</i> -----	58
<i>Continuous Simulation</i> -----	59
<i>Colorado Urban Hydrograph Procedure</i> -----	59
SCS METHODOLOGY -----	59
<i>Drainage Area</i> -----	59
<i>Rainfall Data</i> -----	59
<i>Land Use</i> -----	59
<i>Soil Type</i> -----	61
<i>Time of Concentration</i> -----	61
SURFACE RUNOFF-----	63
ANTECEDENT MOISTURE CONDITION-----	65
UNIT HYDROGRAPH PEAK -----	66
ADJUSTMENTS FOR SWAMPS AND PONDS-----	69
SCS METHODOLOGY TR-55 -----	72
CHAPTER 8: HYDRAULICS OF OUTLET STRUCTURES -----	89
TAILWATER ELEVATION-----	89
<i>High-water marks</i> -----	99
INLET & OUTLET CONTROL - CULVERT FLOW -----	99
<i>Inlet Control</i> -----	100
<i>Outlet Control</i> -----	100
<i>Orifice/Culvert Flow</i> -----	101
<i>Low Flow (Free surface flow)</i> -----	110
<i>Weirs</i> -----	111
<i>Sharp-Crested Weir</i> -----	111
<i>Triangular sharp-crested weir</i> -----	113
<i>Broad-Crested Weir</i> -----	113
<i>Discharge Coefficients (C)</i> -----	114
<i>Weir Length (L)</i> -----	114
<i>Submergence of Weir</i> -----	114
<i>Sloping weirs</i> -----	116
<i>Rating Curves</i> -----	116
<i>Riser Pipes</i> -----	120
CHAPTER 9: STORAGE-VOLUME REQUIREMENTS -----	124
ROUTING TECHNIQUE -----	125
COMPUTER PROGRAMS -----	133

CHAPTER 10: OPERATION & MAINTENANCE	134
OPERATION & MAINTENANCE.....	134
FINANCING OF STORMWATER-MANAGEMENT FACILITIES	136
STORMWATER UTILITY.....	138
<i>Special Property Tax</i>	138
<i>Lump-Sum Payment by Developers</i>	139
<i>Special Assessment District</i>	139
REFERENCES	140
APPENDIX A - DEQ OFFICES	143
APPENDIX B - RAINFALL FREQUENCY FOR MICHIGAN	144
APPENDIX C - HYDROLOGIC SOIL GROUPS FOR MICHIGAN SOILS	150
APPENDIX D - METHOD FOR ESTIMATING "n" VALUES	153
APPENDIX E - CRITICAL DEPTH CHARTS	156
APPENDIX F-1 - HYDRAULIC PROPERTIES OF CULVERT SECTIONS	159
APPENDIX F-2 - HYDRAULIC PROPERTIES OF CULVERT SECTIONS	160

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1.1 - GENERALIZED HYDROLOGIC CYCLE -----	1
FIGURE 1.2 - IMPACT OF URBANIZATION ON FLOOD PEAKS -----	3
FIGURE 1.3 - RESTRICTIONS ON BMPs* -----	6
FIGURE 1.4 - PLOT OF POLLUTANT CONCENTRATION VERSUS TIME -----	8
FIGURE 3.1 - EXTENDED DETENTION POND -----	15
FIGURE 3.2 - PERFORATED RISER -----	17
FIGURE 3.3 - AVERAGE HEIGHT (H) FOR A PERFORATED PIPE OUTLET STRUCTURE -----	18
FIGURE 3.4 - WET DETENTION POND -----	20
FIGURE 3.5 - EXAMPLES OF WATER CIRCULATION WITHIN A DETENTION BASIN -----	25
FIGURE 3.6 - TYPICAL WET DETENTION POND CROSS SECTION -----	26
FIGURE 3.7 - SETTLING VELOCITY AND POND DIMENSION -----	27
FIGURE 3.8 - SETTLING VELOCITY FOR STORMWATER RUNOFF PARTICLES -----	29
FIGURE 3.9 - SUB-SURFACE DRAW OUTLET STRUCTURE -----	31
FIGURE 5.1 - TYPICAL DRYWELL -----	39
FIGURE 5.2 - INFILTRATION TRENCH -----	39
FIGURE 5.3 - GRASSED SWALE WITH CHECK DAM -----	41
FIGURE 5.4 - HYDRAULIC ELEMENTS OF CHANNEL SECTIONS -----	42
FIGURE 5.5 - ESTIMATED VOLUME OF STORAGE BEHIND SWALE BLOCKS -----	43
FIGURE 5.6 - SWALE CONFIGURATION FOR EXAMPLE -----	45
FIGURE 6.1 - EFFECTIVENESS OF DETENTION LOCATION WITHIN A WATERSHED -----	48
FIGURE 6.2 - OFF-LINE DETENTION -----	50
FIGURE 6.3 - IN-LINE DETENTION -----	51
FIGURE 7.1 - TYPICAL WATERSHED DELINEATION -----	53
FIGURE 7.2 - AREA-DEPTH CURVE FOR ADJUSTMENT OF POINT RAINFALL -----	54
FIGURE 7.3 - 100-YEAR, 24-HOUR POINT RAINFALL DEPTHS, STATE OF MICHIGAN -----	55
FIGURE 7.4 - GRAPHICAL SOLUTION OF RUNOFF EQUATION -----	64
FIGURE 7.5 - UNIT HYDROGRAPH PEAK, (Q_p) VERSUS TIME OF CONCENTRATION (T_c). -----	68
FIGURE 7.6 - SCS METHODOLOGY FORM -----	71
FIGURE 7.7 - COMPOSITE CN WITH CONNECTED IMPERVIOUS AREA -----	73
FIGURE 7.8 - COMPOSITE CN WITH UNCONNECTED IMPERVIOUS AREAS AND TOTAL IMPERVIOUS AREA LESS THAN 30%. -----	73
FIGURE 7.9 - AVERAGE VELOCITIES FOR ESTIMATING TRAVEL TIME FOR SHALLOW CONCENTRATED FLOW. -----	75
FIGURE 7.10 - UNIT PEAK DISCHARGE -----	77
FIGURE 7.11 - GRAPHICAL PEAK DISCHARGE METHOD WORKSHEET -----	79
FIGURE 7.12A - TABULAR HYDROGRAPH UNIT DISCHARGE -----	88
FIGURE 7.12B - TABULAR HYDROGRAPH UNIT DISCHARGE -----	88
FIGURE 7.12C - TABULAR HYDROGRAPH UNIT DISCHARGE -----	88
FIGURE 7.12D - TABULAR HYDROGRAPH UNIT DISCHARGE -----	88
FIGURE 7.12E - TABULAR HYDROGRAPH UNIT DISCHARGE -----	88
FIGURE 7.12F - TABULAR HYDROGRAPH UNIT DISCHARGE -----	88
FIGURE 7.13 - PLOT OF HYDROGRAPH FOR EXAMPLE 7.8 -----	88
FIGURE 8.1 - IMPACTS OF NOT CONSIDERING TAILWATER ELEVATION -----	89
FIGURE 8.2 - CROSS SECTION WITH MORE THAN ONE "N" VALUE -----	92
FIGURE 8.3 - TYPICAL RATING CURVE -----	93

FIGURE 8.4 - EXAMPLE CROSS SECTION-----	93
FIGURE 8.5 - RATING CURVE FOR EXAMPLE-----	95
FIGURE 8.6 - EFFECTS OF BACKWATER DUE TO DOWNSTREAM RESTRICTIONS-----	96
FIGURE 8.7 - CRITICAL DEPTH -----	97
FIGURE 8.8 - CRITICAL DEPTH CHART FOR CIRCULAR PIPE -----	98
FIGURE 8.9 - CULVERTS FLOWING UNDER INLET CONTROL -----	99
FIGURE 8.10 - CULVERTS FLOWING UNDER OUTLET CONTROL-----	100
FIGURE 8.11 - HEAD DIFFERENTIAL -----	101
FIGURE 8.12 - HEAD DIFFERENTIAL FOR CULVERT EXAMPLE-----	105
FIGURE 8.13 - OUTLET-CONTROL NOMOGRAPH -----	106
FIGURE 8.14 - INLET-CONTROL NOMOGRAPH -----	107
FIGURE 8.15 - COMPARISON OF INLET AND OUTLET CONTROL FOR EXAMPLE-----	108
FIGURE 8.16 - CULVERT DESIGN FORM -----	109
FIGURE 8.17 - CULVERT FUNCTIONING UNDER "FREE-SURFACE" FLOW -----	110
FIGURE 8.18 - SHARP-CRESTED WEIR -----	112
FIGURE 8.19 - END CONTRACTIONS FOR SHARP-CRESTED WEIR -----	112
FIGURE 8.20 - TRIANGULAR WEIR -----	113
FIGURE 8.21 - BROAD-CRESTED WEIR-----	113
FIGURE 8.22 - WEIR LENGTH INEFFECTIVE DUE TO HIGH GROUND -----	114
FIGURE 8.23 - SUBMERGENCE FACTORS-----	115
FIGURE 8.24 - WEIR DISCHARGE COEFFICIENTS FOR ROAD EMBANKMENTS -----	115
FIGURE 8.25 - IRREGULAR WEIR -----	116
FIGURE 8.26 - EXAMPLE CULVERT AND SPILLWAY CONFIGURATION -----	117
FIGURE 8.27 - CULVERT RATING CURVE -----	118
FIGURE 8.28 - COMBINED RATING CURVE -----	119
FIGURE 8.29 - RISER PIPE -----	120
FIGURE 8.30 - ANTI-VORTEX WALL ON RISER PIPE -----	120
FIGURE 8.31 - WEIR LENGTH FOR RISER PIPE -----	121
FIGURE 8.32 - EXAMPLE RISER PIPE PROBLEM-----	122
FIGURE 8.33 - RISER PIPE RATING CURVE -----	123
FIGURE 9.1 - APPROXIMATE DETENTION BASIN ROUTING-----	124
FIGURE 9.2 - WORKING CURVE FOR EXAMPLE-----	128
FIGURE 9.3 - INFLOW HYDROGRAPH FOR ROUTING EXAMPLE-----	129
FIGURE 9.4 - PARTIAL INFLOW AND OUTFLOW HYDROGRAPHS FOR ROUTING EXAMPLE ---	132
FIGURE 10.1 - MAINTENANCE CHECK LIST-----	137
FIGURE B.1 - 2-YEAR, 24-HOUR RAINFALL-----	144
FIGURE B.2 - 5-YEAR, 24-HOUR RAINFALL-----	145
FIGURE B.3 - 10-YEAR, 24-HOUR RAINFALL -----	146
FIGURE B.4 - 25-YEAR, 24-HOUR RAINFALL -----	147
FIGURE B.5 - 50-YEAR, 24-HOUR RAINFALL -----	148
FIGURE B.6 - 100-YEAR, 24-HOUR RAINFALL-----	149
FIGURE E.1 - CRITICAL DEPTH CHART FOR CIRCULAR PIPE -----	156
FIGURE E.2 - CRITICAL DEPTH FOR RECTANGULAR SECTION -----	157
FIGURE E.3 - CORRUGATED METAL PIPE ARCH -----	158
FIGURE F.1 – HYDRAULIC PROPERTIES OF CULVERT SECTIONS-----	159
FIGURE F.2 – HYDRAULIC PROPERTIES OF CULVERT SECTIONS-----	160

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 3.1 - BASIN SIZE EXPRESSED IN PERCENT OF DRAINAGE AREA-----	21
TABLE 3.2 - DETENTION BASIN STORAGE VOLUME (ACRE-FEET) -----	24
TABLE 4.1 - ESTIMATED LONG-TERM POLLUTANT REMOVAL RATES (%) FOR INFILTRATION BASINS-----	32
TABLE 4.2 - INFILTRATION RATES FOR SOIL GROUPS -----	33
TABLE 6.1 - FREQUENCY AND RAINFALL AMOUNTS FOR EATON COUNTY -----	47
TABLE 7.1 - PERCENT IMPERVIOUS AREAS FOR URBAN LAND USES -----	58
TABLE 7.2 - RUNOFF CURVE NUMBERS FOR SELECTED AGRICULTURAL, SUBURBAN, AND URBAN LAND USE.-----	60
TABLE 7.3 - TOTAL 5-DAY ANTECEDENT RAINFALL, INCHES -----	66
TABLE 7.4 - CURVE NUMBERS FOR DIFFERENT AMC CONDITIONS-----	67
TABLE 7.5 - SWAMP ADJUSTMENT FACTORS -----	70
TABLE 7.6 - IA VALUES FOR RUNOFF CURVE NUMBERS-----	78
TABLE 8.1 - C COEFFICIENTS FOR ORIFICES AND CULVERTS-----	102
TABLE 8.2 - ENTRANCE LOSS COEFFICIENTS-----	103
TABLE 8.3 - SELECTED MANNING'S N VALUES-----	104
TABLE 9.1 - STORAGE-DISCHARGE RELATIONSHIP-----	126
TABLE 9.2 - WORKING CURVE (DT = 0.25 HRS. = 900 SECONDS) -----	127
TABLE 9.3 - OPERATIONS TABLE -----	130
TABLE 10.1 - MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS OF DETENTION FACILITIES-----	134
TABLE 10.2 - RATE SCHEDULE FOR THE CITY OF SEATTLE -----	138

INTRODUCTION

It was not very long ago that stormwater management meant increasing the size of the storm-sewer pipes or enlarging drains to allow stormwater to get away from an area as quickly as possible. However, in many instances this "solution" resulted in increased flooding, erosion, and water-quality problems in downstream areas.

Over the years, people have become more aware of the potential problems caused by increased runoff due to urbanization and increased flood peaks due to drain improvements. In an attempt to remedy the increased flooding and erosion problems, communities (and some states) began to implement stormwater detention.

Typically, stormwater detention involved the construction of dry detention basins that would reduce downstream discharges. The detention basins would "hold back" some of the runoff to be released at a later time. However, in some instances, detention basins were constructed that did not consider the hydrology of the entire watershed. As a result, the basins had little impact on flood discharges and, at times, actually increased flood peaks.

Stormwater management was originally concerned with the quantity of water and the downstream flooding potential. However, over the last 10 to 15 years, there has been a growing concern with the **quality** of the stormwater runoff and its impact on the environment. Stormwater runoff picks up pollutants that have accumulated on the land surface and washes them into receiving waters. The pollutants can include sediment, nutrients, and heavy metals to name a few. They enter the food chain, destroy aquatic habitat, and can essentially "kill" a lake or stream.

As a result of the water quantity and quality concerns, stormwater management has begun to evolve into a field that tries to integrate reducing future flood damages with water-quality improvements. The information presented in this guidebook will provide some background in stormwater management and will offer some approaches to addressing the urban runoff problem.