B.14 WET PONDS

DESCRIPTION

The wet pond or retention pond is a facility which removes sediment, Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), organic nutrients, and trace metals from stormwater runoff. This is accomplished by slowing down stormwater using an in-line permanent pool or pond effecting settling of pollutants. The wet pond is similar to a dry pond, except that a permanent volume of water is incorporated into the design. The drainage area should be such that an adequate base flow is maintained in the pond. Biological processes occurring in the permanent pond pool aid in reducing the amount of soluble nutrients present in the water, such as nitrate and ortho-phosphorus (Schueler, 1987).

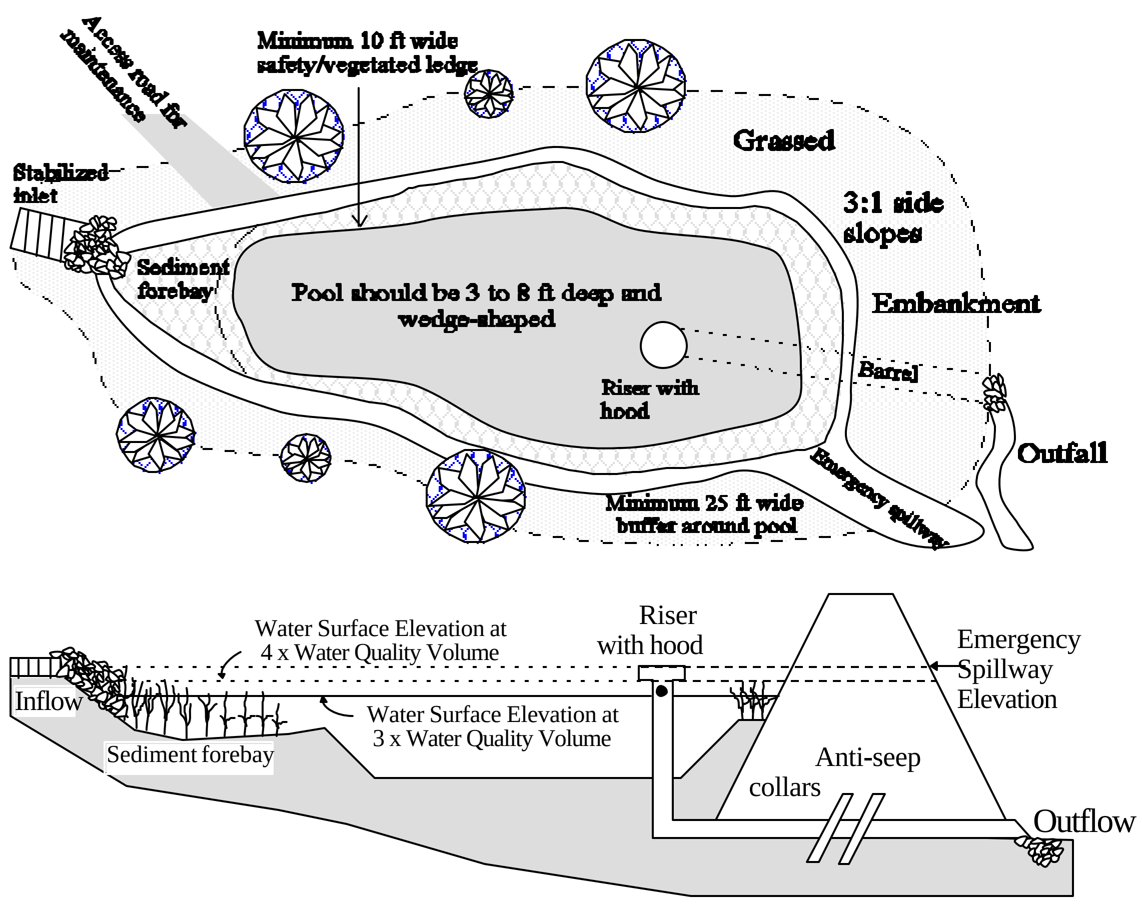

Figure 1. Typical wet pond schematic.

The basic elements of a wet pond are shown in Figure 1. A stabilized inlet prevents erosion at the entrance to the pond. It may be necessary to install energy dissipators. The permanent pool is usually maintained at a depth between 3 and 8 ft. The shape of the pool can help improve the performance of the pond. Maximizing the distance between the inlet and outlet provides more time for mixing of the new runoff with the pond water and settling of pollutants. Overflow from the pond is released through outlet structures to discharge flows at various elevations and peak flow rates. The outfall channel should be protected to prevent erosion from occurring downstream of the outlet.

Soil conditions are important for the proper functioning of the wet pond. The pond is a permanent pool, and thus must be constructed such that the water must not be allowed to infiltrate from the permanent portion of the pool. It is difficult to form a pool in soils with high infiltration rates soon after construction. Eventually, however, deposition of silt at the bottom of the pond will help slow infiltration. If extremely permeable soils exist at the site (type A or B), a geotextile or clay liner may be necessary.

ADVANTAGES

1. Wet ponds have recreational and aesthetic benefits due to the incorporation of permanent pools in the design.
2. Wet ponds offer flood control benefits in addition to water quality benefits.
3. Wet ponds can be used to handle a maximum drainage area of 10 mi^2.
4. High pollutant removal efficiencies for sediment, total phosphorus, and total nitrogen are achievable when the volume of the permanent pool is at least three times the water quality volume (the volume to be treated).
5. A wet pond removes pollutants from water by both physical and biological processes, thus they are more effective at removing pollutants than extended/dry detention basins.
6. Creation of aquatic and terrestrial habitat.

LIMITATIONS

1. Wet ponds may be feasible for stormwater runoff in residential or commercial areas with a combined drainage area greater than 20 acres but no less than 10 acres.
2. An adequate source of water must be available to ensure a permanent pool throughout the entire year.
3. If the wet pond is not properly maintained or the pond becomes stagnant; floating debris, scum, algal blooms, unpleasant odors, and insects may appear.
4. Sediment removal is necessary every 5 to 10 years.
5. Heavy storms may cause mixing and subsequent resuspension of solids.
6. Evaporation and lowering of the water level can cause concentrated levels of salt and algae to increase.

7. Cannot be placed on steep unstable slopes.
8. In California, the wet season in coincident with minimal plant growth.
9. Could be regulated as a wetlands or under Chapter 15, Title 23, California Code of Regulations regarding waste disposal to lands.
10. Pending volume and depth, pond designs may require approval from State Division of Safety of Dams.

DESIGN CRITERIA

1. *Hydrology*. If the device will also be used for stormwater quantity control, it will be necessary to reduce the peak flows after development to pre-development levels.
2. *Volume*. Calculate the volume of stormwater to be mitigated by the wet pond using the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works *Method for Calculating Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) Flow Rates and Volumes Based on 0.75-inches of Rainfall*. The volume of the permanent pool should be 3 times the water quality volume.
3. *Pond Shape*. The pond should be long and narrow and generally shaped such that it discourages "short-circuiting." Short-circuiting occurs when storm flows by-pass the pond and do not mix well with the pool and simply by-pass the pond. Short-circuiting can be discouraged by lengthening the pond or by installing baffles which slow water down and lengthen the distance between the inlet and outlet. A length to width ratio of no less than 2:1, with 4:1 being preferred, will help minimize short circuiting. Also, the pond should gradually expand from the inlet and gradually contract toward the outlet. Several examples of ponds shaped to reduce short-circuiting are shown in Figure 2.
4. *Depth*. The depth of the pond is important in the design of the pond. If the pond is too shallow, sediment will be easily resuspended as a result of wind. Shallow ponds should not be used unless vegetation is adequate to stabilize the pond. If the pond is too deep, safety considerations emerge and stratification may occur, possibly causing anoxic conditions near the bottom of the pond. If the pond becomes anoxic, pollutants adsorbed to the bottom sediments may be released back to the water column. The average depth should be 3 to 6 ft, and depths of more than 8 ft should be avoided (Schueler, 1987). A littoral zone of 6 to 18 inches deep that accounts for 25 to 50 percent of the permanent pool surface for plant growth along the perimeter of the pool is recommended, the littoral shelf will also enhance safety.
5. *Vegetation.* Planting vegetation around the perimeter of the pond can have several advantages. Vegetation reduces erosion on both the side slopes and the shallow littoral areas. Vegetation located near the inlet to the pond can help trap sediments; algae growing on these plants can also filter soluble nutrients in the water column. Thicker, higher vegetation can also help hide any debris which may collect near the shoreline. Native turf-forming grasses or irrigated turf should be planted on sloped areas, and aquatic species should be planted on the littoral areas (Urbonas, et al.,

1992). Vegetation can benefit wildlife and waterfowl by providing food and cover at the marsh fringe. A shallow, organic-rich marsh fringe provides an area which enables bacteria and other microorganisms to reduce organic matter and nutrients (Schueler, 1987).

6. *Side Slopes.* Gradual side slopes of a wet pond enhance safety and help prevent erosion and make it easier to establish dense vegetation. If vegetation cannot be established, the unvegetated banks will add to erosion and subsequently the sediment load. It is recommended that side slopes be no greater than 3:1. If slopes are greater than this, riprap should be used to stabilize the banks (Schueler, 1987).
7. *Hydraulic Devices*. An outlet device, typically a riser-pipe barrel system, should be designed to release runoff in excess of the water quality volume and to control storm peaks. The outlet device should still function properly when partial clogging occurs. Plans should provide details on all culverts, risers, and spillways. Calculations should depict inflow, storage, and outflow characteristics of the design. Some frequently used design details for extending detention times in wet ponds are shown in Figure 3 and are described below (Schueler, 1987):

   a. *Slotted Standpipe from Low-Flow Orifice, Inlet Control (dry pond, shallow wet pond, or shallow marsh) [Figure 3 (a)].* An “L”-shaped PVC pipe is attached to the low-flow orifice. An orifice plate is located within the PVC pipe which internally controls the release rate. Slots or perforations are all spaced vertically above the orifice plate, so that sediment deposited around the standpipe will not impede the supply of water to the orifice plate.
   b. *Negatively Sloped Pipe from River (wet ponds or shallow marshes) [Figure 3 (b)].* This design was developed to allow for extended detention in wet ponds. The release rate is governed merely by the size of the pipe. The risk of clogging is largely eliminated by locating the opening of the pipe at least 1 ft below the water surface where it is away from floatable debris. Also, the negative slope of the pipe reduces the chance that debris will be pulled into the opening by suction. As a final defense against clogging, the orifice can be protected by wire mesh.
   c. *Hooded Riser (wet ponds) [Figure 3 (c)].* In this design, the extended detention orifice is located on the face of the riser near the top of the permanent pool elevation. The orifice is protected by wire mesh and a hood, which prevents floatable debris from clogging the orifice.
8. *Inlet and Outlet Protection.* The inlet pipe should discharge at or below the water surface of the permanent pool. If it is above the pool, an outlet energy dissipator will protect the banks and side slopes of the pond to avoid erosion. The stream channel just downstream of the pond outlet should be protected from scouring by placing riprap along the channel. Also, the slope of the outlet channel should be close to 0.5 percent. Riprap between 18 and 30 inches should be used. If the outlet pipe is less than 24

inches, 9 to 12 inches riprap may be used. Stilling basins may also be installed to reduce flow velocities at the outfall (Schueler, 1987).

9. *Forebay.* A forebay may be installed as part of the wet pond to capture sand and gravel sediment. The forebay should be easily accessible for dredging out the sediment when necessary and access to the forebay for equipment should be provided.
10. *Emptying Time*. A 12 to 48 hour emptying time may be used for the water quality volume above the permanent pool (Urbonas, et al., 1992).
11. *Freeboard.* The pond embankment should have at least 1 ft of freeboard above the emergency spillway crest elevation (Schueler, 1987).

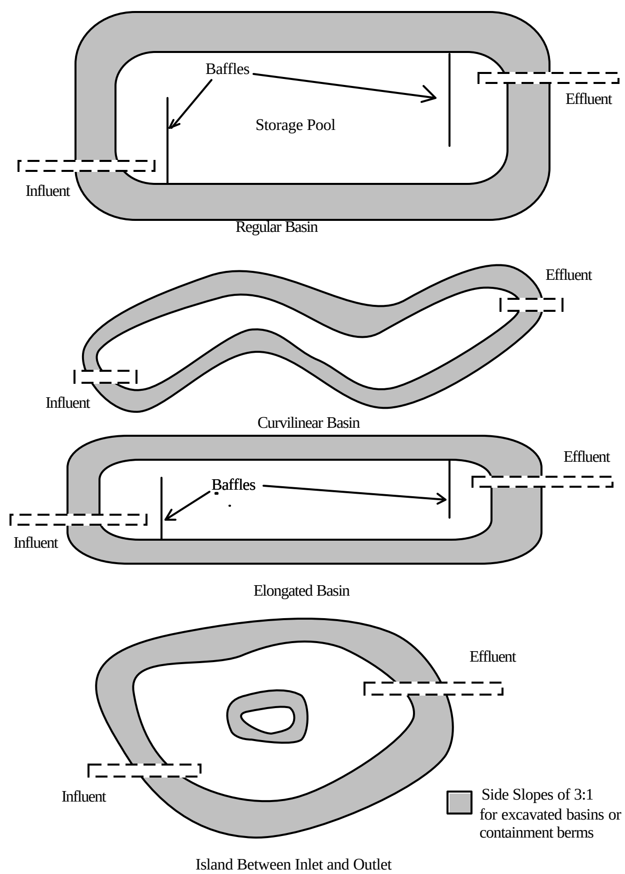

Figure 2. Methods of increasing the length to width ratio.

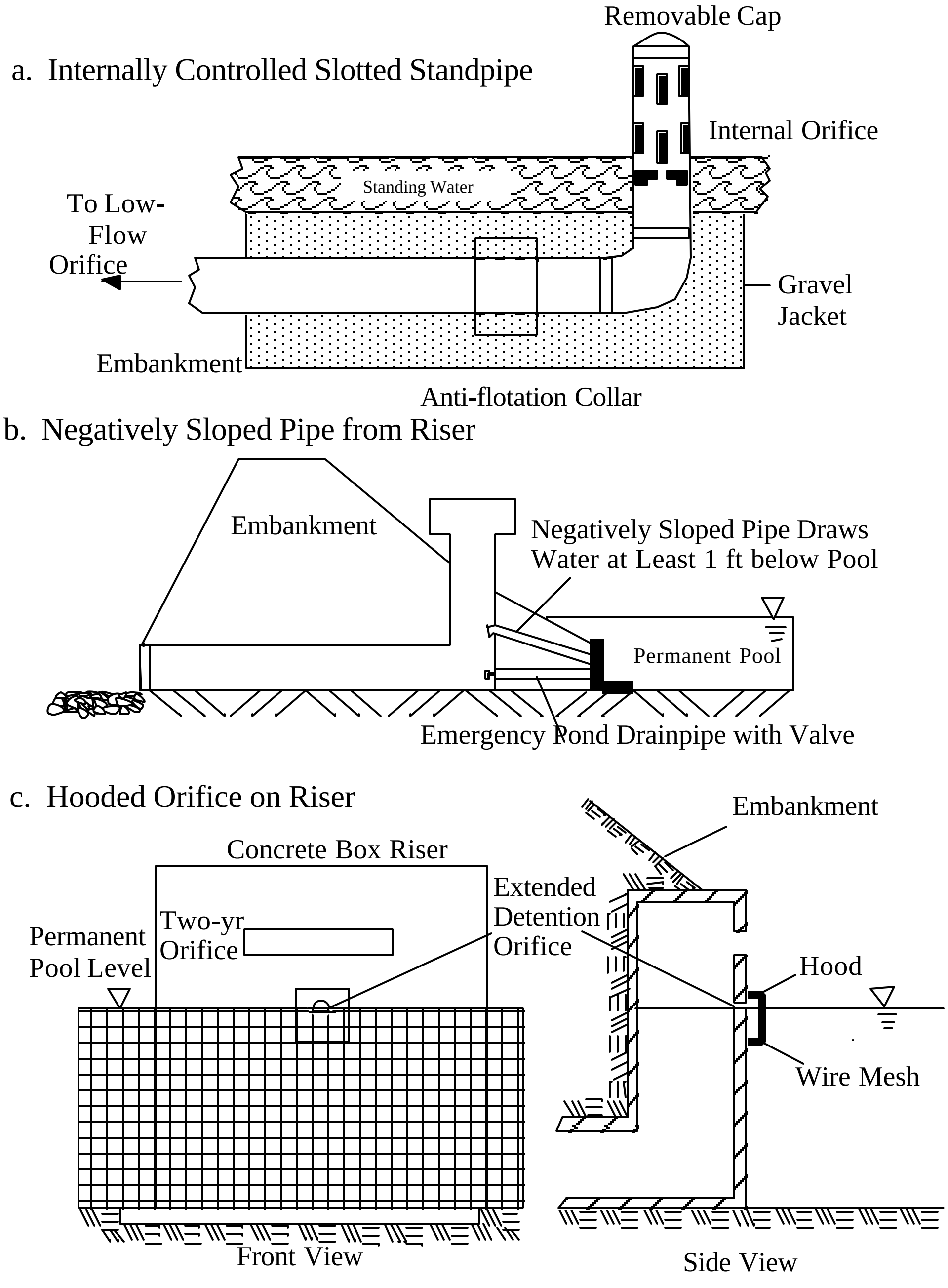

Figure 3. Designs or approaches for extending detention times in wet ponds.

REFERENCES

1. Camp, Dresser and McKee, Inc., Larry Walker Associates, 1993. *California Best Management Practices - Municipal*, California State Water Resources Council Board, Alameda, CA.

2. GKY and Associates, Inc. June 1996. *Evaluation and Management of Highway Runoff Water Quality*, Publication No. FHWA-PD-96-032. Prepared for: US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. Washington, DC.

3. K. H. Lichten, June 1997. *Compilation of New Development Stormwater Treatment Controls in the San Francisco Bay Area*, Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association, San Francisco, CA.

4. T. R. Schueler, 1987. *Controlling Urban Runoff: A Practical Manual for Planning and Designing Urban BMPs*, Department of Environmental Programs, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Washington, DC.

5. B. R. Urbonas, J. T. Doerfer, J. Sorenson, J. T. Wulliman, and T. Fairley, 1992. *Urban Storm Drainage Criteria Manual, Volume 3 - Best Management Practices, Stormwater Quality, Urban Drainage and Flood Control District*, Denver, CO.