



Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District

Maintaining Stormwater Control Practices: *An Overview for Private Owners*

What is a Stormwater Control Practice? The term “Stormwater Control Practice,” or SCP, refers to the permanent stormwater practices installed during construction to control post construction runoff and prevent or reduce the amount of pollution generated by non-point sources. May also be referred to as Best Management Practices (BMPs).

What is non-point source pollution? Sources of non-point pollution include sediment, nutrients, motor oil, and lawn care products that run off hard surfaces and yards into storm drains, which typically empty into nearby streams. A variety of local, state and federal laws encourage or require the control of non-point source pollutants.

Do you have a SCP on your property or in your neighborhood? Ponds, ditches and depressions that you see every day may actually be engineered stormwater facilities designed to reduce flooding and improve water quality.

Some of the more common, **Structural SCPs** found throughout Franklin County include:

- Ponds (Wet & Dry)
- On-lot Storage
- Orifice Plates
- Bioretention Basins
- Underground Detention
- Water Quality Units
- Filter Strips, Swales & Trenches
- Pervious Pavement

There are also **Non-Structural** controls to consider. These usually reflect local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances and include things like riparian setbacks, buffer zones, easements for conservation or utilities, and reserve areas that provide “open space” or protect wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas.

No matter the type of SCP, routine maintenance is needed to sustain effectiveness and ensure long-term environmental benefits.

Who is responsible for inspection & maintenance? Some communities may accept residential SCPs into their existing maintenance programs. However, **if your site is subject to an operation & maintenance agreement, most likely you are the responsible party.**

Your local government may also request that you submit annual documentation showing proof that routine inspections and any required maintenance activities have been performed on your SCPs.

What maintenance activities are needed? Maintenance activities will obviously vary according to the specific SCP and site conditions, but some general guidelines can be found on the next page.



If you do not recognize any of the SCPs outlined in this fact sheet, are unsure if you have a maintenance agreement, or need other assistance, call your local government contact for more information.

Breaking Down Maintenance

The first step for successfully maintaining your site SCPs is to know what you have, where it is, and how it functions. If available, refer to your site plan or operations & maintenance agreement. Most SCPs can be divided into one of three categories:

Retention or detention SCPs gather stormwater runoff and slowly release it to receiving waters.

Examples include wet & dry basins, on-lot storage, orifice plates, underground detention, or manufactured units.

Infiltration SCPs are designed to facilitate the percolation of runoff through the soil to ground water.

Examples include infiltration basins/trenches, dry wells, and porous pavement.

Vegetative SCPs are landscaping features that remove pollutants, and facilitate percolation of runoff.

Examples include grassy swales, filter strips, artificial wetlands, and rain gardens.

Next, create a simple checklist or inspection log and go for a walk! SCPs should be inspected at least once a year. However, performing more frequent inspections will help you identify maintenance needs before they become larger problems. Find example inspection forms at <https://www.franklinswcd.org/urban-conservation>.

Some routine maintenance activities that apply to most SCPs include:

Repairing Erosion



Removing Debris & Litter



Clearing Clogged Structures



Managing Vegetation



Removing Sediment



Non-Routine maintenance occurs less frequently, but usually requires more cost and coordination. These types of tasks include things like repairing/replacing damaged structures; replacing plants, mulch or filter media; dam repairs/reconstruction; dredging.

Sediment As the primary purpose of a SCP is to remove sediment and other pollutants from stormwater, sediment will accumulate and need to be removed. For small facilities this may be completed by hand, but for large facilities, underground systems, and ponds, sediment removal may require heavy equipment and vacuum trucks.

Underground Systems and Water Quality Units are considered confined spaces, with specific safety requirements outlined by OSHA that should be heeded when inspecting or maintaining your system. It is also important that access points (manholes) and inspection ports for these systems, which are commonly located in parking lots, not be covered over by re-paving activities. Removal of accumulated sediments/pollutants is generally achieved with the use of a vacuum truck.

Orifice Plates are used to control the rate at which stormwater is discharged from a SCP and are very common in Franklin County. They can be installed on inlet or outlet structures, and might be easily visible (installed on a headwall) or tucked into a catch basin. These devices should be kept free of obstruction and never un-installed, unless for performing maintenance or first consulting with your local government contact.

Vegetation Management Tips Most SCPs rely on vegetation to filter out non-point source pollution and to prevent erosion on embankments and slopes.

- Unless called out in the design, woody trees and shrubs should not be planted (or allowed to grow) around structures or on dam embankments.
- Minimize the use of pesticides and fertilizers, maintain no-mow zones and replace turf grass with native vegetation buffers whenever possible.
- When mowing does occur, cut grass no shorter than 6-8 inches, do not mow down to the water's edge, and do not allow grass clippings to discharge back into SCPs.
- Remove non-native vegetation (honeysuckle, callery pear, loosestrife, phragmites, etc.)
- **Do not** use shading agents to manage algae blooms in stormwater ponds, as discharge of these products is considered an illicit discharge and in violation of Ohio's Water Quality Standards. More information can be found under the **Stormwater Ponds** section at <https://www.franklinswcd.org/ponds>

Extend the life of your SCPs by looking for ways to reduce the sediment and pollutants that reach them. Consider implementing a street sweeping schedule or install pre-treatment practices and rain gardens. Retrofit older ponds by installing forebays and vegetated buffers. Educate residents and employees on how their actions matter and encourage actions like picking up after pets and fixing car leaks.



This fact sheet provides a very general overview of post-construction SCPs and some of the maintenance required. For more detailed information, call your local government contact or visit <https://www.franklinswcd.org/urban-conservation>

