



## Design Considerations

- Tributary Area
- Area Required
- Hydraulic Head

## Description

Dry extended detention ponds (a.k.a. dry ponds, extended detention basins, detention ponds, extended detention ponds) are basins whose outlets have been designed to detain the stormwater runoff from a water quality design storm for some minimum time (e.g., 48 hours) to allow particles and associated pollutants to settle. Unlike wet ponds, these facilities do not have a large permanent pool. They can also be used to provide flood control by including additional flood detention storage.

## California Experience

Caltrans constructed and monitored 5 extended detention basins in southern California with design drain times of 72 hours. Four of the basins were earthen, less costly and had substantially better load reduction because of infiltration that occurred, than the concrete basin. The Caltrans study reaffirmed the flexibility and performance of this conventional technology. The small headloss and few siting constraints suggest that these devices are one of the most applicable technologies for stormwater treatment.

## Advantages

- Due to the simplicity of design, extended detention basins are relatively easy and inexpensive to construct and operate.
- Extended detention basins can provide substantial capture of sediment and the toxics fraction associated with particulates.
- Widespread application with sufficient capture volume can provide significant control of channel erosion and enlargement caused by changes to flow frequency relationships resulting from the increase of impervious cover in a watershed.

## Targeted Constituents

✓ Sediment	▲
✓ Nutrients	●
✓ Trash	■
✓ Metals	▲
✓ Bacteria	▲
✓ Oil and Grease	▲
✓ Organics	▲

## Legend (Removal Effectiveness)

● Low	■ High
▲ Medium	



## Limitations

- Limitation of the diameter of the orifice may not allow use of extended detention in watersheds of less than 5 acres (would require an orifice with a diameter of less than 0.5 inches that would be prone to clogging).
- Dry extended detention ponds have only moderate pollutant removal when compared to some other structural stormwater practices, and they are relatively ineffective at removing soluble pollutants.
- Although wet ponds can increase property values, dry ponds can actually detract from the value of a home due to the adverse aesthetics of dry, bare areas and inlet and outlet structures.

## Design and Sizing Guidelines

- Capture volume determined by local requirements or sized to treat 85% of the annual runoff volume.
- Outlet designed to discharge the capture volume over a period of hours.
- Length to width ratio of at least 1.5:1 where feasible.
- Basin depths optimally range from 2 to 5 feet.
- Include energy dissipation in the inlet design to reduce resuspension of accumulated sediment.
- A maintenance ramp and perimeter access should be included in the design to facilitate access to the basin for maintenance activities and for vector surveillance and control.
- Use a draw down time of 48 hours in most areas of California. Draw down times in excess of 48 hours may result in vector breeding, and should be used only after coordination with local vector control authorities. Draw down times of less than 48 hours should be limited to BMP drainage areas with coarse soils that readily settle and to watersheds where warming may be determined to downstream fisheries.

## Construction/Inspection Considerations

- Inspect facility after first large to storm to determine whether the desired residence time has been achieved.
- When constructed with small tributary area, orifice sizing is critical and inspection should verify that flow through additional openings such as bolt holes does not occur.

## Performance

One objective of stormwater management practices can be to reduce the flood hazard associated with large storm events by reducing the peak flow associated with these storms. Dry extended detention basins can easily be designed for flood control, and this is actually the primary purpose of most detention ponds.

Dry extended detention basins provide moderate pollutant removal, provided that the recommended design features are incorporated. Although they can be effective at removing

some pollutants through settling, they are less effective at removing soluble pollutants because of the absence of a permanent pool. Several studies are available on the effectiveness of dry extended detention ponds including one recently concluded by Caltrans (2002).

The load reduction is greater than the concentration reduction because of the substantial infiltration that occurs. Although the infiltration of stormwater is clearly beneficial to surface receiving waters, there is the potential for groundwater contamination. Previous research on the effects of incidental infiltration on groundwater quality indicated that the risk of contamination is minimal.

There were substantial differences in the amount of infiltration that were observed in the earthen basins during the Caltrans study. On average, approximately 40 percent of the runoff entering the unlined basins infiltrated and was not discharged. The percentage ranged from a high of about 60 percent to a low of only about 8 percent for the different facilities. Climatic conditions and local water table elevation are likely the principal causes of this difference. The least infiltration occurred at a site located on the coast where humidity is higher and the basin invert is within a few meters of sea level. Conversely, the most infiltration occurred at a facility located well inland in Los Angeles County where the climate is much warmer and the humidity is less, resulting in lower soil moisture content in the basin floor at the beginning of storms.

Vegetated detention basins appear to have greater pollutant removal than concrete basins. In the Caltrans study, the concrete basin exported sediment and associated pollutants during a number of storms. Export was not as common in the earthen basins, where the vegetation appeared to help stabilize the retained sediment.

## **Siting Criteria**

Dry extended detention ponds are among the most widely applicable stormwater management practices and are especially useful in retrofit situations where their low hydraulic head requirements allow them to be sited within the constraints of the existing storm drain system. In addition, many communities have detention basins designed for flood control. It is possible to modify these facilities to incorporate features that provide water quality treatment and/or channel protection. Although dry extended detention ponds can be applied rather broadly, designers need to ensure that they are feasible at the site in question. This section provides basic guidelines for siting dry extended detention ponds.

In general, dry extended detention ponds should be used on sites with a minimum area of 5 acres. With this size catchment area, the orifice size can be on the order of 0.5 inches. On smaller sites, it can be challenging to provide channel or water quality control because the orifice diameter at the outlet needed to control relatively small storms becomes very small and thus prone to clogging. In addition, it is generally more cost-effective to control larger drainage areas due to the economies of scale.

Extended detention basins can be used with almost all soils and geology, with minor design adjustments for regions of rapidly percolating soils such as sand. In these areas, extended detention ponds may need an impermeable liner to prevent ground water contamination.

The base of the extended detention facility should not intersect the water table. A permanently wet bottom may become a mosquito breeding ground. Research in Southwest Florida (Santana et al., 1994) demonstrated that intermittently flooded systems, such as dry extended detention

ponds, produce more mosquitoes than other pond systems, particularly when the facilities remained wet for more than 3 days following heavy rainfall.

A study in Prince George's County, Maryland, found that stormwater management practices can increase stream temperatures (Galli, 1990). Overall, dry extended detention ponds increased temperature by about 5°F. In cold water streams, dry ponds should be designed to detain stormwater for a relatively short time (i.e., 24 hours) to minimize the amount of warming that occurs in the basin.

### Additional Design Guidelines

In order to enhance the effectiveness of extended detention basins, the dimensions of the basin must be sized appropriately. Merely providing the required storage volume will not ensure maximum constituent removal. By effectively configuring the basin, the designer will create a long flow path, promote the establishment of low velocities, and avoid having stagnant areas of the basin. To promote settling and to attain an appealing environment, the design of the basin should consider the length to width ratio, cross-sectional areas, basin slopes and pond configuration, and aesthetics (Young et al., 1996).

Energy dissipation structures should be included for the basin inlet to prevent resuspension of accumulated sediment. The use of stilling basins for this purpose should be avoided because the standing water provides a breeding area for mosquitoes.

Extended detention facilities should be sized to completely capture the water quality volume. A micropool is often recommended for inclusion in the design and one is shown in the schematic diagram. These small permanent pools greatly increase the potential for mosquito breeding and complicate maintenance activities; consequently, they are not recommended for use in California.

A large aspect ratio may improve the performance of detention basins; consequently, the outlets should be placed to maximize the flowpath through the facility. The ratio of flowpath length to width from the inlet to the outlet should be at least 1.5:1 (L:W) where feasible. Basin depths optimally range from 2 to 5 feet.

The facility's drawdown time should be regulated by an orifice or weir. In general, the outflow structure should have a trash rack or other acceptable means of preventing clogging at the entrance to the outflow pipes. The outlet design implemented by Caltrans in the facilities constructed in San Diego County used an outlet riser with orifices sized to discharge the water quality volume, and the riser overflow height was set to the design storm elevation. A stainless steel screen was placed



**Figure 1**  
**Example of Extended Detention Outlet Structure**

around the outlet riser to ensure that the orifices would not become clogged with debris. Sites either used a separate riser or broad crested weir for overflow of runoff for the 25 and greater year storms. A picture of a typical outlet is presented in Figure 1.

The outflow structure should be sized to allow for complete drawdown of the water quality volume in 72 hours. No more than 50% of the water quality volume should drain from the facility within the first 24 hours. The outflow structure can be fitted with a valve so that discharge from the basin can be halted in case of an accidental spill in the watershed.

### ***Summary of Design Recommendations***

- (1) **Facility Sizing** - The required water quality volume is determined by local regulations or the basin should be sized to capture and treat 85% of the annual runoff volume. See Section 5.5.1 of the handbook for a discussion of volume-based design.

**Basin Configuration** – A high aspect ratio may improve the performance of detention basins; consequently, the outlets should be placed to maximize the flowpath through the facility. The ratio of flowpath length to width from the inlet to the outlet should be at least 1.5:1 (L:W). The flowpath length is defined as the distance from the inlet to the outlet as measured at the surface. The width is defined as the mean width of the basin. Basin depths optimally range from 2 to 5 feet. The basin may include a sediment forebay to provide the opportunity for larger particles to settle out.

A micropool should not be incorporated in the design because of vector concerns. For online facilities, the principal and emergency spillways must be sized to provide 1.0 foot of freeboard during the 25-year event and to safely pass the flow from 100-year storm.

- (2) **Pond Side Slopes** - Side slopes of the pond should be 3:1 (H:V) or flatter for grass stabilized slopes. Slopes steeper than 3:1 (H:V) must be stabilized with an appropriate slope stabilization practice.
- (3) **Basin Lining** – Basins must be constructed to prevent possible contamination of groundwater below the facility.
- (4) **Basin Inlet** – Energy dissipation is required at the basin inlet to reduce resuspension of accumulated sediment and to reduce the tendency for short-circuiting.
- (5) **Outflow Structure** - The facility's drawdown time should be regulated by a gate valve or orifice plate. In general, the outflow structure should have a trash rack or other acceptable means of preventing clogging at the entrance to the outflow pipes.

The outflow structure should be sized to allow for complete drawdown of the water quality volume in 72 hours. No more than 50% of the water quality volume should drain from the facility within the first 24 hours. The outflow structure should be fitted with a valve so that discharge from the basin can be halted in case of an accidental spill in the watershed. This same valve also can be used to regulate the rate of discharge from the basin.

The discharge through a control orifice is calculated from:

$$Q = CA(2gH-H_0)^{0.5}$$

where: Q = discharge (ft<sup>3</sup>/s)  
 C = orifice coefficient  
 A = area of the orifice (ft<sup>2</sup>)  
 g = gravitational constant (32.2)  
 H = water surface elevation (ft)  
 H<sub>0</sub> = orifice elevation (ft)

Recommended values for C are 0.66 for thin materials and 0.80 when the material is thicker than the orifice diameter. This equation can be implemented in spreadsheet form with the pond stage/volume relationship to calculate drain time. To do this, use the initial height of the water above the orifice for the water quality volume. Calculate the discharge and assume that it remains constant for approximately 10 minutes. Based on that discharge, estimate the total discharge during that interval and the new elevation based on the stage volume relationship. Continue to iterate until H is approximately equal to H<sub>0</sub>. When using multiple orifices the discharge from each is summed.

- (6) Splitter Box - When the pond is designed as an offline facility, a splitter structure is used to isolate the water quality volume. The splitter box, or other flow diverting approach, should be designed to convey the 25-year storm event while providing at least 1.0 foot of freeboard along pond side slopes.
- (7) Erosion Protection at the Outfall - For online facilities, special consideration should be given to the facility's outfall location. Flared pipe end sections that discharge at or near the stream invert are preferred. The channel immediately below the pond outfall should be modified to conform to natural dimensions, and lined with large stone riprap placed over filter cloth. Energy dissipation may be required to reduce flow velocities from the primary spillway to non-erosive velocities.
- (8) Safety Considerations - Safety is provided either by fencing of the facility or by managing the contours of the pond to eliminate dropoffs and other hazards. Earthen side slopes should not exceed 3:1 (H:V) and should terminate on a flat safety bench area. Landscaping can be used to impede access to the facility. The primary spillway opening must not permit access by small children. Outfall pipes above 48 inches in diameter should be fenced.

### Maintenance

Routine maintenance activity is often thought to consist mostly of sediment and trash and debris removal; however, these activities often constitute only a small fraction of the maintenance hours. During a recent study by Caltrans, 72 hours of maintenance was performed annually, but only a little over 7 hours was spent on sediment and trash removal. The largest recurring activity was vegetation management, routine mowing. The largest absolute number of hours was associated with vector control because of mosquito breeding that occurred in the stilling basins (example of standing water to be avoided) installed as energy dissipaters. In most cases, basic housekeeping practices such as removal of debris accumulations and vegetation management to ensure that the basin dewatered completely in 48-72 hours is sufficient to prevent creating mosquito and other vector habitats.

Consequently, maintenance costs should be estimated based primarily on the mowing frequency and the time required. Mowing should be done at least annually to avoid establishment of woody vegetation, but may need to be performed much more frequently if aesthetics are an important consideration.

Typical activities and frequencies include:

- Schedule semiannual inspection for the beginning and end of the wet season for standing water, slope stability, sediment accumulation, trash and debris, and presence of burrows.
- Remove accumulated trash and debris in the basin and around the riser pipe during the semiannual inspections. The frequency of this activity may be altered to meet specific site conditions.
- Trim vegetation at the beginning and end of the wet season and inspect monthly to prevent establishment of woody vegetation and for aesthetic and vector reasons.
- Remove accumulated sediment and regrade about every 10 years or when the accumulated sediment volume exceeds 10 percent of the basin volume. Inspect the basin each year for accumulated sediment volume.

## Cost

### **Construction Cost**

The construction costs associated with extended detention basins vary considerably. One recent study evaluated the cost of all pond systems (Brown and Schueler, 1997). Adjusting for inflation, the cost of dry extended detention ponds can be estimated with the equation:

$$C = 12.4V^{0.760}$$

where: C = Construction, design, and permitting cost, and  
V = Volume (ft<sup>3</sup>).

Using this equation, typical construction costs are:

\$ 41,600 for a 1 acre-foot pond

\$ 239,000 for a 10 acre-foot pond

\$ 1,380,000 for a 100 acre-foot pond

Interestingly, these costs are generally slightly higher than the predicted cost of wet ponds (according to Brown and Schueler, 1997) on a cost per total volume basis, which highlights the difficulty of developing reasonably accurate construction estimates. In addition, a typical facility constructed by Caltrans cost about \$160,000 with a capture volume of only 0.3 ac-ft.

An economic concern associated with dry ponds is that they might detract slightly from the value of adjacent properties. One study found that dry ponds can actually detract from the perceived value of homes adjacent to a dry pond by between 3 and 10 percent (Emmerling-Dinovo, 1995).

## Maintenance Cost

For ponds, the annual cost of routine maintenance is typically estimated at about 3 to 5 percent of the construction cost (EPA website). Alternatively, a community can estimate the cost of the maintenance activities outlined in the maintenance section. Table 1 presents the maintenance costs estimated by Caltrans based on their experience with five basins located in southern California. Again, it should be emphasized that the vast majority of hours are related to vegetation management (mowing).

Activity	Labor Hours	Equipment & Material (\$)	Cost
Inspections	4	7	183
Maintenance	49	126	2282
Vector Control	0	0	0
Administration	3	0	132
Materials	-	535	535
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>\$668</b>	<b>\$3,132</b>

## References and Sources of Additional Information

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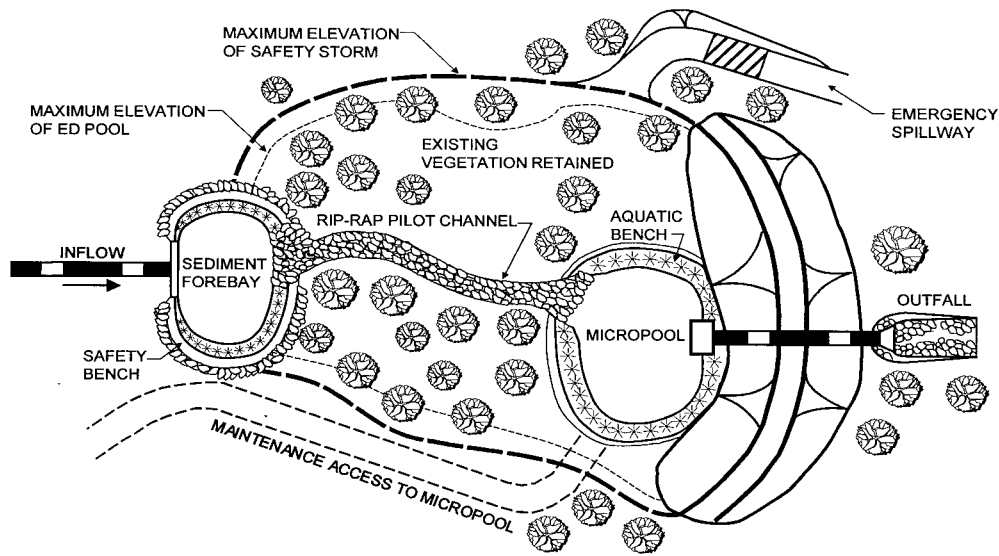
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### ***Information Resources***

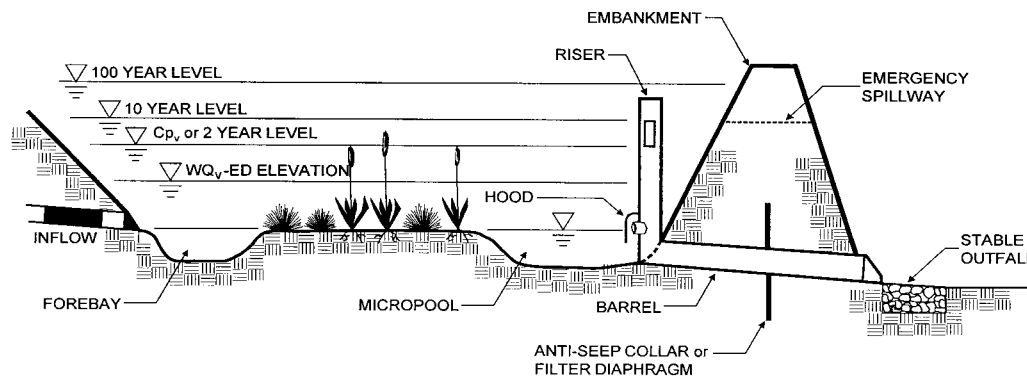
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PLAN VIEW



PROFILE

Schematic of an Extended Detention Basin (MDE, 2000)