

What are Stormwater Control Measures (SCMs) and how do they improve water quality?

SCMs are structures that control and clean stormwater on developed properties. They work by slowing the stormwater, then removing the pollutants in the water. Some SCMs let stormwater infiltration into the ground. Others remove pollutants using plants, filters, gravity, or other methods, before releasing the water after it is clean.

There are many types of SCMs allowed in Blount County. Examples include wet and dry detention ponds, enhanced swales, green roofs, manufactured treatment devices, sand filters, constructed wetlands, bioretention areas, and permeable pavements.

Why do SCMs need to be maintained?

SCMs need to be taken care of so they work well when it rains. If they are not maintained, they cannot improve water quality. Instead, they could even make problems like flooding, erosion, and pollution worse. Repairing damage caused by flooding or pollution from poorly maintained SCMs can cost a lot of money. Maintaining an SCM can cost far less. SCMs that are well taken care of work to improve water quality for many years.

Who is in charge of maintaining SCMs?

If you own property in Blount County that has one or more SCMs, you are responsible for maintaining them in a fully functional condition. SCM maintenance activities can be carried out by others, such as tenants, property managers, or landscape contractors. But it is important to understand that the property owner is ultimately responsible for ensuring maintenance occurs.

What are the SCM regulations?

By law, Blount County requires the use of SCMs on certain types of development and re-development projects to control stormwater. When a property being developed requires water quality treatment, the developer must incorporate SCMs into the design. The design plans show the location and dimensions of the SCM(s) on the property. When the project is finished, the developer turns over the maintenance responsibilities of the SCM(s) on the property to the new owner. There is a long-term operation and maintenance agreement, which provides information on how to inspect and maintain the SCM(s) on the property. When a property is sold, the requirement for SCM inspection and maintenance transfers to the new property owner.

Where can I find information about an SCM on my property?

Information about an SCM on your property may be found on your property's deed or maintenance covenant. If you have questions, contact the County's Register of Deeds at 865-273-5880 or visit Blount County's website. You can also contact the County's Stormwater Department at 865-681-9301 or visit the County's Development Services website.

Call the Blount County hotline at (865) 273-5756
Email us: stormwater@blounttn.org



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THE IMPORTANCE OF STORMWATER CONTROL MEASURES TO WATER QUALITY IN BLOUNT COUNTY



What is Stormwater?

Stormwater is the water that flows off the land after it rains or when snow melts. In places like meadows or forests, rainwater or melting snow soaks into the ground (called infiltration), evaporates into the air, nourishes plants, or travels into streams or bodies of water. The water that flows off the land into streams, rivers, or lakes is called stormwater or runoff.

Urban development replaces the natural landscape with roofs, driveways, sidewalks, and streets. These hard surfaces are called impervious surfaces because they do not allow water to drain through them. When rain falls on impervious surfaces, it creates more stormwater that runs off rather than infiltrating into the soil and being used by plants.

Why is stormwater a problem?

Stormwater picks up trash, chemicals, soil, and other harmful substances as it flows over a landscape. It can go into a storm drain system or straight into a river, lake, stream, or wetland. Whatever goes into a storm drain system does not get cleaned before it goes into the water where we swim, fish, or get drinking water from.

Polluted stormwater can have many negative effects on plants, fish, animals, and people.



Sediment can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow. Sediment can also destroy aquatic habitats.



Too many nutrients, from fertilizers and yard waste, can lead to algae blooms in our streams, rivers, and lakes. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and are broken down by microorganisms in the water. The microorganisms take oxygen out of the water while they are consuming the algae. Fish cannot live in water with low oxygen levels. Large algae blooms cause thick, green mats that can impact recreation, businesses, and property value.



Bacteria and other pathogens (disease causing organisms), from animal and human feces, can wash into swimming areas and create health hazards, often making beach closures necessary.



Trash—plastic bags, six-pack rings, bottles, and cigarette butts—washed into waterbodies can choke, suffocate, or disable aquatic life like ducks, fish, turtles, and birds.

Household hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil, and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick or die from eating diseased fish and shellfish or ingesting polluted water.



Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources. This, in turn, can affect human health and increase drinking water treatment costs.