

INTRO TO STORMWATER

WHY & HOW TO MANAGE

What is Stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater runoff occurs when rain falls or snow melts on hard surfaces like roads, sidewalks, parking lots, driveways, and roofs and cannot soak into the ground, so it drains to storm sewers and eventually to lakes and rivers.

Why Manage Stormwater?

Your HOA should manage stormwater to **protect the environment** and **your community**, and reduce **expensive property damage** from:

- **Flooding:** Large storms can increase downstream flooding and damage your vehicles, homes, and roads, which will require costly repairs.
- **Water pollution:** Runoff picks up pollutants (sediment, oil, salt, pet waste, litter, fertilizer, etc.), which can cause unsafe swimming conditions, harmful algal blooms, poor drinking water quality, and stress on aquatic species.
- **Erosion:** Runoff increases stream volume and speed, which can increase streambank erosion to and result in costly damage to your homes, roads, and other infrastructure.
- **Reduced groundwater:** When water cannot infiltrate or soak into the ground, there is less in underground aquifers, which your community may depend on for drinking water.
- **Warmer water temps:** Runoff is heated as it flows across warm parking lots and roads, making the receiving waters warmer and harming sensitive species such as trout.





How to Manage Stormwater?

Green stormwater infrastructure or **best management practices (BMPs)** are the tools and strategies used to manage stormwater. Unlike typical gray infrastructure (gutters, pipes, culverts), **green infrastructure mimics the natural water cycle** and uses a **combination of natural and engineered systems to capture the rain where it falls**, reducing the flow to sewers and surface waters and increasing the quality and quantity of local water supplies.

In your HOA, you may see stormwater ponds, raingardens, bioswales, vegetated buffers, trees, permeable pavement, or rainwater harvesting systems, which are all stormwater BMPs.



Green Infrastructure Benefits

Green infrastructure can be constructed faster than gray infrastructure and provides benefits beyond stormwater management to your HOA, including:

- **Cost savings** from avoided flooding losses
- **Increased property values**
- **Habitat** for pollinators and other wildlife
- **Aesthetic value** in home and recreational spaces
- **Improved air quality** and **public health** from capturing greenhouse gases and air pollutants



Stormwater Management in HOAs

Developers often install green infrastructure practices to meet regulations and build more sustainable communities. Ownership then transfers to the HOA to maintain, which is critical for both short and long-term function. **If your HOA fails to maintain its BMPs, some cities may perform the service and charge you for it**, which could cost more than maintaining it yourself. Check your maintenance agreement with the city to **identify your legal obligations**, and **develop a maintenance plan**.

Visit mnwcd.org/hoa-stormwater-tools for more information and resources.

Reach out to your city for more information about your stormwater management responsibilities.

