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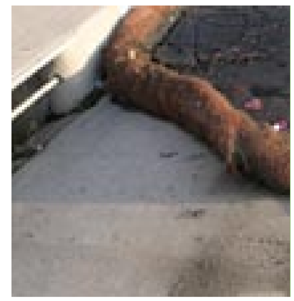
AUGUST 2005



Alternative Approaches to Stormwater Quality Control

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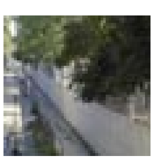

Prepared for: The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board

Cover Photo: Catch Basin protection, Ventura, California. Storm Drain, Long Beach California. Permeable Parking Lot, Wales. Photos by Joseph S. Devinny

Preferred Citation: Joseph S. Devinny, Sheldon Kamieniecki, and Michael Stenstrom, 2005. *Alternative Approaches to Stormwater Quality Control*, Center for Sustainable Cities, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

A recent, widely debated study entitled *An Economic Impact Evaluation of Proposed Storm Water Treatment for Los Angeles County* projects extremely high costs for compliance with stormwater quality regulations (Gordon et al., 2002). These estimates followed from the study's fundamental assumption that the only way to comply with water quality regulations is to capture most or all of the flow and subject it to advanced treatment, and to do so at rates equal to peak runoff rates. *In contrast, this report shows that there are far less expensive approaches available that, should they be implemented, will achieve high levels of compliance with current federal water quality standards.*

Alternatives Considered

This report reviews present federal and state regulations and regulatory policy to determine whether advanced ultrafiltration treatment of the entire runoff flow is required to meet water quality standards, or whether compliance can be achieved through the widespread adoption of the various "best management practices" (BMPs) more commonly used for runoff quality control. The work identified and analyzed alternative measures that can be employed to meet present federal and state water quality standards. Particular attention was paid to strategies that concern ground water recharge, pollutant source control, and runoff detention, capture, and BMP treatment.

The report reviews possible approaches for controlling runoff water quality in the Los Angeles Region (the jurisdiction of the Los Angles Regional Water Quality Control Board) and presents a conceptual regional plan, including rough cost estimates. The study pursued a broad approach, providing an evaluation of total costs and benefits for the region, including those for municipalities, businesses, and individuals. The objective of the study was to outline a complete solution to stormwater quality problems, i.e., the plan is intended to meet the requirements of the stormwater permit and Total Maximum Daily Loads and provide acceptable water quality for the area. The alternatives of best management practices (BMPs) for control of individual pollutants (source control), and if necessary, a regional system of wetlands and infiltration facilities to provide final treatment and groundwater replenishment were chosen. These will be much cheaper than advanced treatment plants, and will provide benefits whose value exceeds costs.

Assumptions Made for Determining Costs

Following the review of possible remedial actions for stormwater pollution, a conceptual plan for the Los Angeles Region was developed. It was predicated on the following assumptions:

Because source control is always cheaper than cleaning polluted water, efforts should begin with preventing the release of pollutants to runoff. This includes measures like litter control, improved street cleaning, improved industrial housekeeping and others. Such approaches may constitute sufficient control for runoff coming from residential areas, so that these areas will require no further action.

For new residential development, anecdotal information indicates that landscaping that captures and infiltrates the first-flush storm will be of comparable cost to traditional landscaping, and should therefore be used. For commercial construction, costs may be higher, and adequate regional facilities might be substituted.

Where non-structural BMPs will not be adequate, or where implementation is very expensive, efforts must expand to include regional wetlands and stormwater parks (multiple-use infiltration basins).

Large portions of the Los Angeles Region are already built out to various degrees, constraining available stormwater management solutions. This report assumes that 1000 square miles can be characterized as "low density", and that these regions can be served by a combination of source control, treatment wetlands, and infiltration systems. Another 1000 square miles is "high density" and can be served by source control and infiltration systems. About 50 square miles are "extremely high density" (such as downtown areas) and will require more sophisticated infiltration or treatment devices that occupy smaller areas.

Estimated Costs

Total costs for compliance with runoff water quality regulations were predicted to be between \$2.8 billion (if non-structural systems are sufficient for the entire region) to between \$5.7 billion and \$7.4 billion (if regional treatment or infiltration systems must also be constructed throughout the entire area). It is likely that regional systems will be required for at least some, but not all, of the area, so that the final costs will be somewhere between these extremes.

- Enforcement of littering, pet waste, and chemical use ordinances is expected to cost about \$9 million per year.

- Public education will cost about \$5 million per year. A program to detect and prevent illicit discharges to the system will cost about \$80 million per year at first, but can be reduced to much lower levels as compliance is achieved.

- Increased cleaning of storm drains will be needed if regional solutions are not used, and will cost about \$27 million per year.

- Trash discharges to receiving waters can be controlled by installing screening devices on catch basins, enforcing litter laws, and improving street cleaning services. Estimates are that the immediate cost of instituting these measures will be about \$600 million over the Los Angeles Region.

- During periods of low flow, runoff water should be diverted to existing wastewater treatment plants. Construction costs for this effort will be about $28 million.

- Trash control and removal of particulates and their associated pollutants can be facilitated by improved street cleaning. It is expected that this will cost $7.5 million per year more than current street cleaning programs, with a present worth of $250 million.

- On-site BMPs required for individual firms might cost about $240 million. Costs associated with compliance with the ¾-inch rule for new construction will be a modest fraction of construction costs.

- With regard to structural BMPs, total costs (regional wetlands and infiltration systems) were first estimated by determining the costs per square mile of drainage area incurred at other sites, and multiplying by the area over which they will be applied. Wetlands for the "low density" areas were estimated to cost $420,000 per square mile of drainage area, for a total cost of $420 million. Infiltration systems for the "high density" areas were estimated to cost $3.7 million per square mile of drainage, for a total cost of $3.7 billion. More sophisticated treatment BMPs (such as sediment traps and oil adsorbers) for the "extremely dense" areas were estimated to cost $33 million per square mile of drainage, for a total of $1.7 billion. Thus total new facilities costs are $5.8 billion.

- A second method for estimating structural BMP costs utilized costs per acre-foot of retention capacity as determined by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works Sun Valley Project. Presuming that runoff from a ¾-inch storm must be captured in the low-density, high density, and extremely high density areas with runoff coefficients of 0.4, 0.6, and 1.0, costs are $53,000, $98,000, and $470,000 per acre-foot, respectively. The overall facilities cost estimate using this method is $4.0 billion.

Estimated Benefits

There are substantial benefits to the examined approaches that extend beyond the value of stormwater quality control. Reductions in pollutant releases will improve public health and neighborhood livability. Restoration of the hydrologic cycle will replenish groundwater reservoirs, reduce flood risks, and provide greenspace for recreation and wildlife habitat. It was determined that the total value of benefits from the alternatives for runoff quality control described will exceed the costs. Total benefits for the non-structural stormwater quality control programs in the Los Angeles Region are estimated at $5.6 billion. Implementation of the non-structural and regional measures throughout the Los Angeles Region would have benefits worth $18 billion.

- Reduced need for flood control is expected to save about $400 million.

- Property value increases from additional greenspace and bodies of water are expected to amount to $5 billion over the Los Angeles region.

- Additional groundwater supplies created by infiltration will have a current worth of about $7.2 billion.

- “Willingness to pay” surveys in similar circumstances suggest that the public amenity value of avoiding stormwater pollution of local bodies of water is about $2.5 billion.

- Cleaner streets are worth about $950 million.

- Improved beach tourism will bring in about $100 million.

- Preservation of the nature’s services in the marine coastal zone, such as nutrient recycling and chemical maintenance of the atmosphere, is worth about $2 billion.

- Reduction of sedimentation in local harbors will save $330 million.

- Improvements in public health associated with reduced exposure to fine particles from streets are likely significant, but could not be quantified.

Recommendations for Immediate Action

Municipalities that have the responsibility for meeting runoff quality regulations should take some immediate steps.

- Outreach programs, explaining to citizens the need for runoff quality control and discouraging illegal discharges such as littering, should begin.

- Data should be collected on the stormwater discharges from subwatersheds to determine what BMPs are workable, and general plans should be updated to include policies that promote stormwater control.

- An administrative structure should be established which includes the relevant stakeholders and funding agencies for each watershed (such as watershed councils).

- Funding plans should be developed.

- Building codes that work against runoff quality control should be changed immediately—in particular, all parking lots built from now on should also be stormwater infiltration systems.

- All new street cleaning equipment should be high-quality vacuuming systems. Appropriate agencies should be encouraged to use the latest microbiological techniques to investigate sources of pathogenic organisms in runoff, so that mitigation efforts can be optimally designed.

INTRODUCTION

This report identifies and analyzes alternatives for control of stormwater runoff in Los Angeles County. A recent, widely debated study entitled, *An Economic Impact Evaluation of Proposed Storm Water Treatment for Los Angeles County* projects extremely high costs for compliance with stormwater quality regulations (Gordon et al., 2002). These estimates followed from the study's fundamental assumption that the only way to comply with water quality regulations is to capture most or all of the flow and subject it to advanced treatment, and to do so at rates equal to peak runoff rates. As this report shows, however, there are far less expensive approaches that, if implemented, can achieve high levels of compliance with current federal water quality standards.

A broad approach was taken: an evaluation was made of total costs and benefits for the region, including those for municipalities, businesses, and individuals. A complete solution to stormwater quality problems was considered—that is, the plan is intended to meet the requirements of the stormwater permit and Total Maximum Daily Load and provide acceptable water quality for the area. The recommendations for steps to be taken are not limited to the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LA Regional Water Board). Action by other governmental agencies will also be required. The study begins with a brief description of runoff sources and contaminants. A review of present federal and state regulations and regulatory policy to was done to determine whether advanced ultrafiltration treatment of the entire runoff flow will be required, or whether compliance can be achieved through the widespread adoption of the various "best management practices" (BMPs) more commonly used for runoff quality control. The study then identifies and analyzes alternative measures that can be employed to meet present federal and state water quality standards. Particular attention is paid to strategies that facilitate ground water recharge, source control measures, storm water detention and capture, and BMP treatment. While prevailing uncertainties make an overall cost estimate only approximate at this time, costs of specific approaches are illustrated with examples. Financial benefits, such as those regarding groundwater replenishment, more appealing beach environments, improved public health, and the creation of additional urban green space, are also addressed in the report. Clearly, water is a scarce resource in this region of the country, and economic evaluations of different management techniques for stormwater runoff must also consider the benefits of improved water quality and water supply as well as flood control. Prior to reviewing federal and state water quality regulation and policy, this study provides an overview of more general policy and regulation theory.

Runoff

The bulk of urban runoff is generated during rainfall events, and can properly be termed stormwater. This flow is extremely irregular, especially in Southern California, where most days are dry, and measurable rain occurs on average of only 32 days per year. Total rainfall in the area is modest, averaging about 16 inches per year. A large storm in this area might drop as much as three inches of rainfall in 24 hours, but this is still much less intense than typical rainfall events in other states, such as those on the East Coast.

Even so, high flows and flooding do occur in Southern California because of the topography. Water from large watersheds drains into local rivers, and slopes are steep, so that rainfall is rapidly collected and concentrated.

Water also enters the storm drains from non-rainfall sources. Sprinklers left on overnight, car washing, and hoses used to clean sidewalks and driveways generate smaller streams sometimes called nuisance flows. These flow in the storm drain system all year, and with residual stream flows (and in a some areas, recycled wastewater), constitute dry-weather flow. The terms "stormwater" and "runoff" are often used interchangeably. However, it is important in some cases to recognize the difference—stormwater arrives suddenly in huge amounts, while nuisance flows are much smaller and run all year.

Urbanization of the landscape substantially changes the amount and composition of runoff. Because less water infiltrates (percolates) into soils, the total amount of runoff is increased. Because the water runs off pavement more rapidly, it is concentrated to make peak flows higher. Recharge of groundwater is reduced, and the shallow groundwater that feeds some streams dries up, so surface flows decrease in some areas. Surface flows may increase during dry weather in other areas because of nuisance flows from over-irrigation and car washing. In general, the storage and buffering effects of soils and groundwater reservoirs are reduced. Runoff flowing through vegetation, or entering and leaving shallow groundwater, is subject to the effects of filtration and biodegradation, which has a considerable purifying effect. Water runoff from pavement is not cleaned, and indeed is contaminated by whatever dirt and pollutants are on the pavement.

Pollutants

The cities of Southern California use "separate" systems, meaning stormwater is collected apart from the wastewater generated by toilets and showers. The wastewater enters a closed network of pipes and is carried to treatment plants. Stormwater may initially flow in underground conduits, but eventually passes to open flood control channels, rivers, and the ocean. This storm water drainage system is called a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). Runoff pollutants are different in nature from those in sewage. Pathogens are present, but in far smaller concentrations, as are nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen. There may be more petroleum hydrocarbons, dust, sediments, and settled air pollutants in runoff, but total organic content in runoff is usually much lower than in wastewater.

The pollutant load of stormwater varies greatly with location. The water contains pollutants that wash off rooftops, parking lots, industrial facilities, and the streets. Pollutants may also be discharged illegally, when individuals pour motor oil into the storm drains or industries release toxic pollutants.

Water flowing in the streets picks up trash, dust, dirt and other materials that have been deposited on the pavement. The dust includes fine particles of rubber from tire wear, settled air pollutants, trace metals from brake pads and other mechanical sources, and pet feces. Cars drip motor oil onto the pavement and the early flows of fall may carry a petroleum sheen.

Stormwater quality protection measures may be placed in three general categories. Infiltration allows percolation of the water into the ground, relying on the soil to remove pollutants from the replenishing groundwater and eliminating the discharge to runoff. Source control measures prevent the release of pollutants, so that the water is never contaminated. Treatment systems remove the pollutants from the stormwater before it reaches the ocean.

Runoff Sources and Quality

Stormwater and runoff come from a great variety of sources and carry a varied suite of pollutants. There are many approaches to the task of protecting receiving waters, and the best choice depends on stormwater source and quality. Runoff from a residential area of single-family homes, for example, is unlikely to carry industrial pollutants, but may have small amounts of oil and grease from roads, microbiological contamination from pet feces., and dissolved nutrients from fertilizers. These are readily removed by filtration in soil, so groundwater recharge, with its additional benefit of replenishing aquifers, is a good choice. Runoff from construction sites is less likely to carry harmful microorganisms, but may have heavy loads of sediment. The best choice here is to use dikes, detention ponds, and other measures to allow the sediment to settle out of the water before it is percolated to groundwater or released to storm drains. The dispersed and difficult-to-control pollutants of urban commercial areas may best be dealt with by providing regional solutions, such as parkland designed to serve simultaneously as a flood control basin, a groundwater recharge site, and a sedimentation basin for large amounts of water.

Streets

Streets, particularly those in dense commercial areas, are the most difficult source of urban runoff to manage. They receive litter, dust and dirt, air pollutant particulates, pet feces, occasional human waste, trace metals and oil from cars, various illegal discharges, and other pollutants. Because they are the first part of the stormwater collection and transport system, they receive and pass on pollutants that are carried away from parking lots, commercial establishments, and industries.

Exposed Commercial Activity

Manufacturing and other commercial activities, even those dealing with hazardous materials, have no effect on stormwater quality if the work is carried out under cover. However, for some large-scale activities, such as oil refining, this is not practical. Rain falling on machinery, materials, or contaminated surfaces can pick up pollutants. Measures can be taken to cover individual activities, or treatment systems can be installed to clean the water before release.

Construction Sites

Frequently, the first step taken in construction of new facilities is to clear the land of vegetation and pavement. The exposed soil is highly vulnerable to erosion by rainfall, and the movement of trucks and machinery can "track" soil to the adjacent streets.

Residences

Single-family homes are a source of some pollutants. Roof runoff will contain dust, bird feces and settled air pollutants. Runoff from gardens may contain pesticides and fertilizers. Occasionally, homeowners will (illegally) dispose motor oil or paint waste into storm drains. For the most part, however, runoff from neighborhoods of single-family homes is relatively less polluted (if household toxics such as pesticides are properly used). Multiple-family residences produce many of the same pollutants, but typically have a higher ratio of rooftop and impervious surface to permeable landscaping, so that more water runs off.

Commercial Rooftops

Roof runoff from commercial facilities may be slightly polluted with air pollutant dusts, bird droppings, hydrocarbons from roof tar, and occasionally, some trace metals from rooftop machinery. The contaminants present may be very similar to those found on residential roofs, but handling the runoff may be more difficult because commercial areas have a high ratio of roof area to land area, and often have little landscaping.

Parking Lots and Landscaping

A significant fraction of urban land is devoted to parking lots. Parking lots are commonly polluted by litter, heavy metals from auto-parts and road wear, and by oil leaking from cars. Spilled food is present near establishments that sell food, and pet feces, bird droppings, and settled air pollutants will also be present, and all of these can be washed away in the runoff. Virtually all parking lots are designed for rapid drainage to the street or storm drain. Indeed, where grass or other plantings are present, these are commonly surrounded by curbs that prevent flow of the water from the lot into the soil. Many designs, in fact, promote runoff from the vegetation to the pavement.

ASSESSMENT OF REGULATORY POLICY

Overview of Policy and Regulation Theory

This report, in identifying and assessing BMPs, takes a strategic regulatory planning approach to managing stormwater runoff in Los Angeles County. Strategic regulatory planning involves a close examination of the legislative goals concerning the given policy. The ultimate end of strategic regulatory planning is to control behavior through methods that agree with legislative goals and societal values regarding the issues at hand. Thus, a strategic approach demands careful consideration first of whether enforcement is appropriate; and second, if enforcement is appropriate, to what degree should the parties involved be pressured to comply; and third, how coercive should the regulatory devices be? Compliance with existing laws and regulations, in this case the provisions of the federal Clean Water Act and state law, is a major goal of the strategic regulatory planning process.

How compliance is defined can vary markedly depending upon the actors involved and the policymaking context. In this sense "compliance" means the degree to which members of a target group conform to the directives of an agency, court, legislative body, or some other governmental agency. One way to determine whether members of a target group are in compliance with an environmental law is to monitor levels of pollution on a regular basis. We assume that the greater the number of individuals and firms that are in compliance with rules, the more likely pollution will decrease in a given locality.

When legislators pass laws, they generally expect them to be vigorously enforced and fully obeyed. Only idealists, however, actually believe that this is possible or even necessary in all cases. Political and economic factors usually force policymakers to take a more realistic approach to enforcement by setting a desired and attainable level of compliance prior to program implementation. At this stage, policymakers must consider whether 100 percent compliance is necessary. If not, they must determine what degree of compliance is needed in order to meet environmental quality goals. While the desired degree of compliance is often only a rough estimate, several factors must be kept in mind. Policymakers must take into account, for example, the extent to which members of a target group are making a "reasonable" effort to change their behavior and follow the law.

If it is either unrealistic or undesirable to aim for total compliance on the part of the target population, a clear decision rule must be formulated concerning enforcement priorities. In a policy area where polluters vary a great deal in size and how much they pollute, for example, it is commonly most prudent to concentrate enforcement efforts on the largest polluters. If firms are roughly the same size and pollute about the same amount, however, alternative guidelines for identification and discrimination must be set. For example, will businesses be selected randomly for monitoring and inspection? Is systematic enforcement, perhaps based on location, possible? Or, is self-regulation the preferable approach? The decision rule should relate to the strategic goals, resources, and motivations of all those involved. Further considerations include the legal authority for enforcement, the resources of the enforcement agency, and the fragmentation of the enforcement agency (or agencies).

In the ex post review/revision stage, policymakers determine the effectiveness of the regulatory program after it has been implemented. Feedback and evaluation are used to assess program performance. Legislative goals are used as a guide in determining whether regulatory approaches are succeeding or failing.

If policymakers determine that the program goals are still desirable, they will continue the same course of action. If they determine that the goals are being met, they will either maintain present enforcement levels or perhaps decrease enforcement efforts. The latter decision should only be made if policymakers believe they can save time and money and feel reasonably certain that compliance rates will not suffer. Appropriate and immediate action is required, of course, if the objectives are no longer desirable or if the objectives are not being achieved. In nearly every case, the aim of policy revision will be improvement in compliance and environmental quality. According to Ingram, the implementation phase of a statutory program "should contribute toward policy improvement or the evolution toward more tractable problems for which there are more doable and agreeable responses." (1990:476) Realization of the statutory goal, therefore, is not the only way to gauge the success of program implementation.

The conceptual perspective for the selection of BMPs analyzed in this report relies on Lowi's (1964) policy classification scheme, with further elaboration by Salisbury (1968). Lowi classifies policies as distributive (non zero-sum policies in which nearly everyone benefits), redistributive (policies that approach zero-sum, in which some benefit and some lose), and regulatory (policies that also tend toward zero-sum, and in which government prescribes rules of behavior for particular groups). Salisbury added a critical dimension to Lowi's typology by identifying self-regulation policies as a fourth policy type. Self-regulation policies are frequently offered as a noncoercive alternative by sectors of society targeted for external regulation, and they are invariably non zero-sum. These policies also impose constraints upon a group, but are perceived only to increase, not decrease, the beneficial options to a particular segment of the population.

Under this classification scheme, policies are *either* self-regulatory *or* regulatory. Thus, the Lowi and Salisbury typologies suggest that regulatory policies are either noncoercive (through self-regulation) or coercive (through direct command-and-control regulation). In the real world, however, regulatory devices tend to fall at different points along a continuum of coerciveness. In other words, devices intended to control behavior tend to vary according to their restrictiveness. Non-coercive approaches (through self-regulation) occupy one end of the continuum while coercive approaches (through direct command-and-control regulation) occupy the other end.

Conceptualizing regulation in these terms provides water quality policymakers a flexible framework in which to assess alternative regulatory mechanisms. Water quality policymakers have a menu of regulatory approaches from which to choose, and careful thought must be given as to which regulatory devices are best suited to control stormwater runoff without being unnecessarily harsh. If members of the target population (e.g., citizens, small businesses, municipalities, etc.) unanimously believe that stormwater regulations and deadlines are too restrictive and unfair, they will likely ignore what they are being told to do. At the same time, if regulatory devices are too weak and not sufficiently coercive to lead to improvement in water quality, then efforts to control stormwater runoff will fail. Water quality policymakers, therefore, must be familiar with the target population and possess considerable information before they select the most appropriate regulatory mechanisms that embody the level of coercion necessary to achieve an optimum degree of compliance.

Cost is a second dimension that characterizes regulatory mechanisms. Cost here refers to the amount of money government must spend to administer a particular regulatory approach (cost to the regulated community will be considered later). In general, the most coercive activities (e.g., imprisoning polluters) require the greatest government involvement and therefore are more expensive to administer than the least coercive activities (e.g., economic incentives). Limited government revenues obviously make this an important variable. This is especially the case in current government efforts to control stormwater pollution.

The total cost and coerciveness of the selected regulatory program represent the overall government effort necessary to attain compliance and control water pollution. Compliance can be achieved in varying degrees and is best conceptualized along a continuum ranging from avoidance to adherence. Under optimal conditions (e.g., a harmonious political environment), policymakers will be able to use the least coercive enforcement techniques (e.g., reporting by firms and municipalities and formal compliance tracking) at the least cost to achieve full compliance. The expectation is that least coercive mechanisms are always preferable to more coercive mechanisms if only because the former devices are more cost-effective. In contrast, extremely restrictive enforcement arrangements (e.g., court injunctions) will necessitate direct government involvement and thus require substantial cost. Under ideal conditions, therefore, policymakers will select regulatory devices that are the least coercive and least costly and that lead to compliant behavior.

Unfortunately for policymakers, optimal conditions are rare. Many times the conditions that do exist (e.g., a lack of agency funds or a small staff) tend to diminish the effectiveness of the least coercive approaches, often to the point where the outcomes are in danger of moving toward avoidance behavior. In order to prevent outcomes from moving in this direction, policymakers must select techniques, either singularly or in combination, that are affordable and sufficiently coercive to produce compliant behavior.

Naturally, policymaking is a dynamic process and circumstances tend to change over time. Decision makers are continuously gauging the potential impact of given conditions on regulatory mechanisms and making adjustments as they see fit. Eventually, they may be forced to adopt expensive and restrictive approaches that will result in compliant behavior in an attempt to prevent outcomes from moving toward avoidance behavior. When accurate information is available and incorporated into deliberations, policymakers usually will achieve the greatest level of compliance possible with the least effort and expense regardless of the conditions that exist at the time. This underscores the importance of obtaining the most accurate data available as changes occur over time.

In a pluralist, multi-level system like the United States, some communities may favor avoidance behavior in the face of unpopular regulations. While such situations may arise from time to time, in most cases policymakers will want their regulatory devices to achieve the highest level of compliance possible under given conditions.

Stormwater Regulation and Regulatory Intent

The federal Clean Water Act utilizes two approaches to managing water quality: technology-based requirements and national water quality standards. Section 303(d) of the Act integrates these two approaches by stipulating that states make a list of water bodies that are not attaining standards after the technology-based rules are implemented. For water bodies on this list, as well as where the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator believes appropriate, the states are to formulate TMDLs which must account for all sources of the contaminants that forced the listing of the water bodies. Under federal law, TMDLs must account for contributions from point sources (federally permitted discharges) and pollution from nonpoint sources. The U.S. EPA must review and approve the list of contaminated waters and every TMDL. In the event that the U.S. EPA does not approve the list of impaired water bodies or a TMDL, the Agency must establish them for the state. (www.swrcb.ca.gov/tmdl/background.html, July 15, 2003)

The Clean Water Act does not specifically require the adoption of TMDLs. Instead, Section 303(d), Section 303(e), and their provisions stipulate TMDLs be included in water quality plans. The U.S. EPA has adopted rules (40 CFR 122) requiring that the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits be modified to be consistent with all approved TMDLs. An NPDES permit outlines specific limits of pollution for a particular discharger. Nearly all the states, including California, are permitted to administer the NPDES permit program. (U.S. EPA administers the permit system in the remaining states.) Implementation plans are to be formulated along with the TMDLs.

California Law

California effectuates the provisions under the Clean Water Act principally through institutions and procedures set out in certain provisions of the California Water Code, including those of the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. These provisions established the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) within the California Environmental Protection Agency to develop and implement state policy for water quality control.

The Porter-Cologne Act also established nine California Regional Water Quality Control Boards that operate under the authority of the SWRCB. Each Regional Board is comprised of nine members and an executive officer appointed by the members of each board. The Regional Boards develop and adopt water quality control plans for all areas within their region. The SWRCB formulates, adopts, and revises general procedures for the development, adoption, and execution of water quality plans by the Regional Boards. It reviews these plans and either approves them or returns them for revision and resubmission. Water quality plans do not become effective until the SWRCB endorses the plans, followed by approval by the California Office of Administrative Law.

The Evolution of Water Pollution Control

During the 1970s, policymakers considered point source pollution to be the biggest threat to the water quality of the nation's inland lakes, rivers, and streams. (www.swrcb.ca.gov/tmdl/background.html, July 15, 2003) The Clean Water Act established a number of programs to address point sources of pollution, and most federal money went to formulate and implement point source controls. California pursued the same approach in its effort to improve the state's water quality. In addition, the State and

Regional Boards implement smaller scale corrective actions for nonpoint source pollution as permitted under the Porter-Cologne Act.

A major goal of the Clean Water Act was to expand treatment of wastewaters. According to Rosenbaum (2002), all treatment plants in operation before July 1, 1977 were required to have "secondary treatment" levels. All treatment facilities, regardless of age, were required to have "the best practicable treatment technology" by July 1, 1983. The Act also appropriated 18 billion dollars between 1973 and 1975 to assist local communities in building necessary wastewater treatment facilities. The federal government paid for 75 percent of the capital cost for building the new facilities. Programs focusing on treatment facilities resulted in significant improvements in water quality by the late 1980s.

Concerns over the nation's water quality arose again due to the growing impacts of nonpoint source pollution, and environmental groups looked to the TMDL requirements to ameliorate continuing water quality problems. A series of lawsuits ensued to force regulators to adopt an aggressive approach to TMDL development. Thus far, over 40 lawsuits have been filed throughout the nation, most of them by environmental groups. (www.swrcb.ca.gov/tmdl/background.html, July 15, 2003) The lawsuits are commonly filed against the U.S. EPA due to its responsibility to approve TMDLs. Several of them have led to negotiated settlements and consent decrees that are overseen by the courts. At present, California is operating under three consent decrees covering most of the North Coast Region, the entire Los Angeles Region, and Newport Bay and its tributaries in the Santa Ana Region.

TMDLs in California are established either by the Regional Boards or by the U.S. EPA. Those established by the Regional Boards are designed as Basin Plan amendments and include implementation rules. Those formulated by the U.S. EPA normally contain the total waste load allocations as required by Section 303(d), but do not include extensive implementation rules, primarily because U.S. EPA implementation of nonpoint source pollution control strategies are generally confined to education and outreach in accordance with CWA Section 319. (www.swrcb.ca.gov/tmdl/background.html, July 15, 2003) Presently, TMDLs are required for all waters and pollutants on the 303(d) list and must consider and include allocations to both point sources and nonpoint sources of contaminants. The limitations in a TMDL may be other than "daily load" limits. There also can be multiple TMDLs on a specific body of water, or there can be one TMDL that focuses on many contaminants. Current examples of TMDLs in the Los Angeles Region include the trash TMDLs for the Ballona Creek and Wetland, Los Angeles River Watershed, and East Fork San Gabriel River, and the wet-weather bacteria TMDL for the Santa Monica Bay Beaches. At this time the Section 303(d) list contains over 1,400 water body/pollutant combinations. Based on this list, the State Board estimates that about 800 TMDLs are needed. The Regional Boards are now developing over 120 TMDLs, with several addressing multiple pollutants. (www.swrcb.ca.gov/tmdl/background.html, July 15, 2003)

Concerns over implementation have become a significant issue in the formulation of TMDLs. (www.swrcb.ca.gov/tmdl/background.html, July 15, 2003) Although these concerns generally fall outside the provisions of Section 303(d), they are nevertheless important to achieving water quality improvements as a result of the establishment of TMDLs. While it is possible to conduct technical assessments of total load without considering implementation issues, one must address the possible mechanisms by which pollution can be reduced in determining allocations to various sources. Considering different implementation options can help analysts avoid adopting allocation schemes that are far more costly than necessary or, even worse, unachievable. The TMDL strategy in California seeks to engage the public and cultivate an understanding of watershed issues. It relies on an adaptive process that matches management capabilities with scientific knowledge and information.

The Stormwater Permit

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LA Regional Water Board) has adopted a NPDES permit containing waste discharge requirements for MS4 discharges within the County of Los Angeles (with the City of Long Beach excluded because it is covered under a separate MS4 permit). The main intent of the Permit is to reduce significantly the amount of various pollutants contained in stormwater runoff. The County of Los Angeles has identified seven critical industrial and commercial sources of contamination: 1. wholesale trade (scrap recycling, automobile dismantling), 2. automotive repair/parking, 3. fabricated metal products, 4. motor freight, 5. chemical and allied products, 6. automotive dealers/gasoline stations, and 7. primary metal products. The priority industrial sectors and automobile repair facilities/ gas stations (two of the commercial sectors) on the list contribute substantial concentrations of heavy metals to stormwater. Overall, the Permit is intended to establish and implement a timely, comprehensive, cost-effective stormwater pollution control program to reduce the discharge of pollutants in stormwater to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP) from the permitted regions in the County of Los Angeles to the waters of the U.S. subject to the jurisdiction of the Permittees and also meet water quality standards. BMPs must be identified and implemented to reduce the discharge of pollutants in stormwater to the MEP and also meet water quality standards.

The Permit has established an iterative process that allows municipalities in Los Angeles County to measure noncompliance, test alternative BMPs, and consult County and regional water quality authorities. Thus, the Permit provides a mechanism to make adjustments to the required BMPs as necessary to ensure their adequate performance. According to the U.S. EPA, “Water quality-based effluent limits for NPDES-regulated stormwater discharges that implement wasteload allocations in TMDLs *may* be expressed in the form of BMPs under specified circumstances….If BMPs alone adequately implement wasteload allocations, then additional controls are not necessary.” (U.S. EPA, Memorandum, November 22, 2002, p.2)

Regulatory Mechanisms

Pollution control regulations can range from programs that prescribe very specifically what the regulated community is to do, to programs that only set goals and leave the community to find the best methods to reach the goals. Programs of the first kind are often criticized by the regulated community for lack of flexibility—the standard complaint is “This approach does not work well for our particular case. We could do this in another way and accomplish the goals for a lower price”. Programs of the second kind provide flexibility, but are often criticized for vagueness: “We don’t know how to do this. We are not sure what we have to do to come into compliance”.

The stormwater management program is clearly of the second type, and it should be so. Stormwater quality control is an extremely complex issue, influencing, if not everything under the sun, then everything under the rain. The best means of compliance will certainly differ from city to city, depending on land uses, land prices, and a host of physical characteristics of the landscape. It is likely that, as the nation engages the problem, new approaches will be developed. Entrepreneurs will develop new devices and methods as others are tried and discarded. Strict specification of methods at this time might well eliminate approaches that are more economical and effective, so a flexible approach is best.

However, an inevitable side effect of maintaining flexibility is that the regulated community faces an unsettling level of uncertainty. Mayors and city councils faced with planning future infrastructure and future budgets are understandably uncomfortable facing mandatory water quality goals without specified means of reaching those goals. This level of uncertainty will decline as plans are developed and experience with water quality control measures accumulates.

There is a historical precedent for this approach in the program for control of air pollution in Southern California. Like stormwater pollution, it is generated by a very large number of sources with varying compositions and emissions rates. Many of the sources are difficult to monitor and regulate. Implementation of pollution controls has been accompanied by intense political controversy. Even so, air pollution control efforts have been relatively successful—pollution levels and their associated health effects have declined. While costs have been high and some high-polluting marginally profitable businesses have closed or left the area, it is also clearly true that the economy of the area has not collapsed, as some predicted. Few people would suggest that we should return to days when taking a deep breath was literally painful.

Policy Implementation

Our research indicates that the LA Regional Water Board is strongly committed to abating pollution from stormwater runoff as effectively and inexpensively as possible. The U.S. EPA supports the LA Regional Water Board's efforts to require individual municipalities in Los Angeles County to adopt necessary BMPs to control stormwater runoff. Federal and state policymakers along with environmental group leaders believe that BMPs, if widely and strategically implemented, can significantly reduce stormwater pollution and improve water quality throughout Los Angeles County. Given the proven effectiveness of BMPs in different areas of the country (and the world), the LA Regional Water Board does not envision the need to build new advanced treatment plants throughout the region, and indeed has expressed the specific intent that such plants should not be required. Advanced treatment is viewed as an absolute last resort given the huge expense it would entail and the confidence policymakers and environmental leaders have in the ability of BMPs to reduce pollution significantly and allow the region to meet federal clean water standards. The authors of this report concur with this position. Some municipal leaders in Los Angeles County have asked why they should be forced to adopt BMPs when there is a possibility that advanced wastewater treatment plants will ultimately be required. Even if advanced treatment plants are necessary in the future, which is highly unlikely, the adoption of BMPs will dramatically reduce the amount of water and the mass of pollutants these plants will treat. This will reduce pollution treatment costs and improve the effectiveness and ability of plants to handle large volumes of water during heavy rain periods. That is, BMPs will be used as part of any program to build advanced treatment plants because the much cheaper BMPs will reduce the costs of the very expensive advanced treatment plants. Implementing BMPs now will be a good investment even in the unlikely event that an advanced treatment plant is required.

The LA Regional Water Board has focused some efforts on reducing trash in stormwater runoff, and it has adopted a "zero trash" rule to achieve this goal. The Board does not expect all communities to eliminate every single piece of trash from inclusion in stormwater runoff. Instead, the Board policy is that communities in Los Angeles County make reasonable efforts to prevent trash from entering storm drains. "Trash" is defined as materials larger than ½ cm, so municipalities can comply with this regulation by installing ½-cm screening devices on their catch basins, by enforcing litter laws already on the books and by conducting street sweeping in areas where trash tends to accumulate. Public education about littering and the installation and maintenance of catch basin devices can provide substantial progress in preventing garbage from entering storm drains.

In order to avoid a costly court battle with state water pollution policymakers, the County and City of Los Angeles have recently agreed to spend $168 million to reduce by half the amount of trash that collects in the 51-mile-long Los Angeles River (McGreevy and Weiss, 2003). In addition, the City of Los Angeles agreed to drop its lawsuit against state policymakers over the overall plan to abate polluted stormwater runoff. The agreement settles a lawsuit filed by the city and county that opposed the LA Regional Water Board's requirement to reduce trash entering the river 10 percent annually over the next 10 years. The LA Regional Water Board officials negotiated the deal, which requires the city and county to reduce rubbish going into the river and Ballona Creek 50 percent by September 2008, at which point state regulators will consider whether further rules are necessary. The agreement also provides local officials more flexibility in trying less-costly approaches of reducing trash. Environmental groups such as Heal the Bay, Santa Monica BayKeeper, and Friends of the L.A. River applauded the agreement. Rather than spend money on litigation, county and city officials will allocate funds to improve water quality.

Clearly, all communities in Los Angeles County will have to share the financial burden in helping to reduce contamination from stormwater runoff. This may require many communities to modify their budget priorities.

As long as communities make a reasonable, good faith effort to address stormwater pollution issues, it is unlikely that federal and state officials will take legal action. Thus far, this has been the case. Failure to make such an effort, however, will certainly result in legal action against violators. Moreover, environmental groups can choose to file lawsuits against federal and state officials if they do not continue to pursue polluters. Such action will lead to costly delays in meeting federal water quality standards and will likely lead to even more draconian measures given present federal and state law and previous judicial decisions.

Previous Actions by the LA Regional Water Board

The impacts on water quality and the heightened risks to public health from MS4 discharges that affect receiving waters across the U.S. and in Los Angeles County and its coastline have been well studied and documented. Accordingly, the LA Regional Water Board has taken a number of significant actions to control such discharges (LARWQCB, 2001)

In 1990, the LA Regional Water Board adopted Order No. 90-079, the Los Angeles County MS4 Permit. That permit required the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, the County of Los Angeles, and the incorporated municipalities in Los Angeles County to implement stormwater pollution controls including updating ordinances, optimizing existing pollutant controls such as street sweeping, construction site controls, and others. The Regional Board required all Permittees to adopt at least 13 specific BMPs for consistency across the County. The 1990 permit was executed on a system wide basis due to the highly interconnected storm drain system serving a population substantially larger than 100,000 residents. At this point, the region was committed to MEP standards—cleaning up stormwater to the maximum extent practicable.

On July 15, 1996 the LA Regional Water Board issued Order No. 96-054 that updated the 1990 permit. The 1996 Los Angeles County MS4 permit required model programs be formulated and implemented by the Permittees for Public Information and Public Participation, Industrial/Commercial Activities, Development Construction, Illicit Connections and Illicit Discharges, Public Agency Activities, and Development Planning. These model programs will change with time as more data on stormwater impacts are collected and become available.

On January 31, 2001 the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works formerly requested to renew their MS4 permit in the form of an ROWD for the County of Los Angeles and the incorporated cities, except the City of Long Beach. This request began the process of reissuance of the permit, which entered into its third permit term. On the same day the Los Angeles County Flood Control District submitted an ROWD. The Regional Board staff invested considerable time and effort in providing opportunities for public participation and comment. Over 30 meetings, two workshops, and many outreach activities were conducted to allow the public, Permittees, and other interested parties enough opportunity to participate in the development of permit requirements and language prior to consideration by the Regional Board for adoption. The reissued MS4 permit committed the region to meeting water quality standards based on the State Water Resources Control Board's precedential Orders.

Implementation of the MS4 permit requirements should reduce pollutants in stormwater in a cost-effective manner. The adoption of BMPs should also reduce pollutant discharges and enhance the quality of surface water.

The final steps of the regulatory process are now under way—TMDLs for the various impaired water bodies of the region are being promulgated.

Overall, it is clear that the LA Regional Water Board does not intend to require that municipalities build advanced treatment plants: indeed, they have publicly expressed the sentiment that they oppose this solution.

Implementation of Regional Solutions

A regional infiltration and BMP treatment system, in combination with source control of trash, pesticides, and trace metals, can substitute for individual site controls on land parcels within the drainage area. This could take the form of "Local Equivalent Area Drainages", implementing regional solutions that would achieve better results than the application of new source controls, which, in built up areas, will have significant effects only over the long term during which existing structures are rebuilt.

Funding for regional solutions may pose a challenge because of Proposition 13 and other restrictions on tax policy. The challenge however is not insurmountable if property-owners and voters become adequately informed and educated. Nevertheless, regional solutions may significantly shift administrative and cost burdens for water quality protection from businesses and development firms to local government.

Trading Schemes

"Cap and trade" systems, in which regulatory agencies set a cap on the amount of pollution allowable and allow trading of discharge rights within the constraints of the cap, have been successful in several fields. A group of municipalities, for example, might assign discharge rights to landowners within a watershed such that total releases meet the constraints of the TMDLs. They could then allow trading in the discharge rights, so that those who can reduce discharges at least cost are the first to do so, and the overall cost of meeting the TMDL is minimized. Municipalities themselves, as owners of parks and open space, might be able to develop regional solutions and fund them through sales of discharge rights to others.

Stormwater pollution control may be particularly amenable to this approach because the costs of control are highly site-specific. In many cases, there may be considerable economy in applying regional solutions in the best possible sites rather than controlling every site individually.

DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

Infiltration

Before the City of Los Angeles was established, most of the rain that fell in the region evaporated or percolated into the soil. The groundwater was continually replenished and runoff flows were small. As population grew, impermeable surfaces such as paved roads, parking lots, and rooftops covered more and more of the land. Residences, commercial facilities, and roads were designed to shed water as rapidly as possible. Historical measurements of discharges to the Los Angeles River at Firestone Boulevard indicate that runoff has increased from 5% to 45% of rainfall. This change adversely affected stormwater quality in two ways. First it increased the amount of stormwater flow, magnifying the cost of any measures to control quality (and also requiring ever more costly flood control measures). Second, water that flowed directly to streams and the ocean no longer benefited from the purifying action of soil and vegetation, which can remove particulates through physical filtering, sequester some chemicals by adsorption, and destroy organic and biological contaminants by biodegradation.

Any program for remediation of stormwater contamination should reverse this trend, reducing the load of both water and pollutants on other parts of the system. At the same time, pollution of groundwater must be avoided. However, infiltration will benefit from the very considerable capacity of soils to filter particles, adsorb contaminants, and biodegrade organic materials. A relative estimate of the magnitude of the problem may be made by comparison with examples of leaking underground storage tanks at gasoline stations. In many cases, spills of tens or hundreds of gallons of gasoline are now being handled by “intrinsic remediation”—allowing natural biodegradation to degrade the hydrocarbons. The acceptability of this approach has been supported by extensive research. Hydrocarbon infiltration with stormwater will involve far lower concentrations of hydrocarbon, and will mostly be the higher-molecular-weight compounds that are much less mobile in soils than gasoline.

We can also compare stormwater infiltration to the effects of septic tanks. These systems infiltrate sewage that has received only a modest degree of treatment. Yet they are still in use in the Los Angeles Region, and indeed are the primary waste disposal method for 15% of households in the U.S. Groundwater contamination from septic tanks has occurred, but most are considered effective and safe waste disposal systems.

This comparison suggests that the relatively low concentrations of pollutants in common stormwater, with appropriate controls on sources of specific contaminants, will not pose a significant threat to groundwater quality.

The permeability of soils in the Los Angeles basin varies from place to place. Beneath the Whittier Narrows spreading basins, for example, sand and gravel deposits allow very high rates of infiltration. In other areas, clay-rich soils reduce rates of infiltration. However, the historically low rates of runoff indicate that infiltration is capable of handling the bulk of the rainfall in the Los Angeles Region. Many areas routinely considered as having poor infiltration rates will never the less be useful as multi-purpose infiltration systems. A soccer field, for example, can be used as an infiltration basin at little additional cost, and will make a valuable contribution even if infiltration rates are low in comparison to those in spreading basins.

Source Control

Industrial Releases

Industrial discharges can be controlled by a vigorous program of source identification and control. Businesses have a fundamental responsibility to do their work without contaminating their neighborhoods, and in the great majority of cases can do so without significant interference with their activities.

Trash Management

Many businesses and some homeowners contribute a disproportionate amount of trash to the urban burden. Paper waste often accumulates in the parking lots of fast food outlets and strip malls, where it can wash into the street during rainstorms. Inadequate dumpsters and garbage cans are overloaded so that trash spills into the streets. Poorly covered trucks can allow trash to fly out on the streets. In addition, citizens throw trash from their cars onto the streets (it has been estimated that as much as 60% of trash on freeways by weight is cigarette butts). All of these practices are illegal, but enforcement is currently rare and weak. While perfect compliance with anti-litter laws is not expected, there could certainly be major improvements through enforcement. Much of the cost of such efforts could be recovered through fines, with the satisfying result that those causing the problem would be paying for cleaning it up.

Municipalities are responsible for the trash deposited on their streets, and most will respond by installing screens on catch basins. These are sometimes referred to as catch basin “inserts”. They will have half-centimeter openings and will be designed to collect trash during periods of low or modest flow, but to bypass the flow during heavy storms or if they are clogged. This will avoid local flooding that would be caused by clogging.

Street Cleaning

Trash that escapes enforcement efforts can be collected by street cleaning before it reaches the storm drains. Enhanced street cleaning is likely to be necessary as cities install half-centimeter screens on their catch basins. Trash that is now washed out of sight (at least until it reaches the beaches) will accumulate on the screens and possibly clog them. More effective and more frequent street cleaning will reduce this problem.

A major fraction of the pollutants in stormwater runoff are adsorbed on particles—this is particularly true of trace metals and pesticides, which are significant contributors to impairment of the receiving waters. Some of this particulate matter can be removed from streets by higher-quality street vacuuming equipment, which collects the dirt much as a vacuum cleaner does. This equipment is more expensive to purchase and operate, but it would make a significant contribution to reducing chemical pollutants in stormwater.

The Port of Seattle has tested high-quality street sweepers as a cleanup method in its container storage area (FHWA, 2003). The approach was successful, removing one-third to one-half of particulates and their associated pollutants. While the equipment is somewhat more expensive than simple sweepers to purchase, operations costs are about the same. The fine particles carry a significant portion of the pollutants, but they constitute only a small portion of the total mass of material on the streets, so their collection and disposal does not significantly increase costs. Such street cleaning may be more effective in Southern California, where the long dry season allows dust to accumulate for many months.

As explained in detail later, there would be substantial secondary benefits associated with improved street cleaning. Neighborhoods would look better, and residents would be exposed to less resuspended road dust, which dirties buildings and may have significant negative health effects.

Some investigators have also proposed street washing, using recycled water. If this were done during dry weather, and all of the dry-weather flow were being collected for treatment in wastewater treatment plants, street pollutants would be kept out of the rivers.

Pesticide Substitutions

Many of the receiving waters in the Los Angeles Region are impaired by pesticides, particularly Diazinon and Chlorpyrifos. The approach to this pollution should be the same as it has been historically for other pesticides that threatened environmental quality. None has ever been dealt with by treating contaminated waters. Those who use the pesticides should be responsible for ensuring that no water pollution results from that use. Pesticides that cannot be properly managed by appropriate use protocols such as labeling or use rules enforcement and which have an inherent tendency to persist in the environment should be banned. Pesticide controls are instituted by the state and federal governments, so additional political effort will be needed if a bans on specific compounds are required.

We presume that these pesticides are used in many cases because they are currently the most economical approach to insect control, and that substitution of another method would involve some cost. However, there are many possible alternatives, including use of more readily degraded pesticides, insect-resistant strains of plants, biological control with natural insect predators, and others. There are many examples of success with such integrated pest management (IPM), particularly at golf courses (NRDC, 1999). In some cases owners were pleased to find that costs actually declined when they switched from pesticide-dominated approaches to IPM.

Trace Metals

Trace metals enter stormwater as rain drains from industrial operations, transportation land uses, and other sources. Brake pad wear on cars produces a fine dust of copper. Zinc is released when galvanized equipment contacts the water. Trace metals in stormwater can be controlled by covering machinery and materials that release trace metals, by capturing and treating runoff from large industrial operations and transportation land uses, and by developing alternative materials for brake pads (research is currently under way on this objective).

Control of Automotive-Related Sources

Motor vehicles and related facilities are the source of many types of runoff pollutants, including hydrocarbons from oil and fuel leaks, and road wear. Vacuum street cleaning is effective in dealing with particle-bound hydrocarbons left on the street, and infiltration can effectively deal with hydrocarbons that are transported or deposited off the street surface.

Control of Bacteria

Bacterial contamination in stormwater is typically measured as counts of "coliform" bacteria, a category that contains many species of bacteria. While very few of the coliforms cause disease, some of these species are very abundant in human waste, and so detection of the group has long been used as a marker for sewage pollution. Efforts to interrupt the fecal-oral transmission of disease have commonly taken the elimination of coliforms from water as a surrogate for judging efforts to prevent the spread of the microorganisms that do cause disease. Where coliform counts in drinking water have been reduced (in much of the industrialized world) transmission of water-borne disease has indeed been largely eliminated. Thus the use of coliform counts as a marker for disease control has been remarkably successful. In some cases, a more specific test for "fecal coliforms" is used, because the test is an indicator of contamination by warm-blooded animals, including humans. While we have always counted coliforms, the real concern is pathogens—microorganisms that can cause disease. For sewage pollution, the association between the two has been strong, and controlling coliforms has been equivalent to controlling disease. The situation for stormwater, however, may be far more complex. Because there are many non-human sources of coliforms, it is possible that the test for their presence may be positive even when no human pathogens are present.

The sources of the coliforms found in stormwater remain uncertain. Pet wastes certainly include bacteria that test positive as coliforms, but the degree to which pet wastes constitute a disease threat is uncertain. Wild mammals, such as raccoons, possums, skunks and coyotes, may contribute when their wastes are left on paved surfaces. It has been proposed that fecal matter from homeless people denied access to restrooms may be a source, but there has been no study confirming this. In less developed areas with poor soil infiltration conditions, it is likely that poorly operated septic tanks and illegal disposal of gray water are contributing to the coliform counts detected in runoff. If septic tanks are the source, strict enforcement of waste control ordinances is appropriate. If homeless people are the source, provision of restroom facilities would be far cheaper than any imaginable stormwater treatment system (as well as being more humane). If pet feces are the source, the only approach is, through public outreach and enforcement, to press people to clean up after their pets. It must be expected, however, that such an approach will not be 100% effective. The contribution of wild animals seems uncontrollable.

Because the sources and significance of the coliform counts remain uncertain, it is important that research on the topic be pursued immediately. The recent development of genetic techniques for precise and rapid identification of bacterial species now provides the tool needed to provide the information needed to develop effective policies.

Coliforms, and presumably the associated human pathogens, are substantially reduced in treatment wetlands. Infiltration of course removes them from runoff flows, and adsorption on soils and biodegradation are effective at protecting groundwater. Water storage, because it holds coliforms in an environment for which they are not adapted, and because it allows settling of particles to which they may be attached, has some beneficial effect. Disinfection, using chlorine, chloramines, or ultraviolet light is possible, but relatively expensive.

Water Quality Control Board Rules allow for 17 exceedences of the coliform limit per year. There are about 32 days per year of significant rainfall in the region, so it has been anticipated that exceedences during the heavy winter storms will be difficult to control, and will be allowed.

Improved Enforcement

It is important that source control efforts include genuine and credible enforcement. Rules that are widely ignored, of course, will not help clean up runoff water, and a considerable fraction of runoff contaminants come from illicit discharges or disposal. Trash is an obvious example—littering is already illegal, so 100% of the trash in stormwater represents illegal release.

The Environmental Protection agency describes an example in which improved enforcement of existing law was effective (USEPA, 1999):

"…during a 12-month period, the Houston, Texas, Public Utilities Department identified 132 sources of discharges leading to Buffalo Bayou, the local drinking water source, with estimated flow rates ranging from 0.3 to 31.5 liters per second. Houston's program involved monthly sampling from bridge crossings; analysis of samples for carbonaceous biochemical oxygen demand, ammonia and nitrate nitrogen, pH, TSS, DO, temperature, fecal coliform, and chlorine residual; comparison of samples to baseline flow concentrations; weekly sampling of temperature, dissolved oxygen (DO), and fecal coliform in stream reaches suspected of contamination; boat sampling to identify the contaminating outfalls along the reach; and, finally, a land-based search to pinpoint the source. Of the flows identified during the program, 85% were due to broken or clogged wastewater lines and 10% were due to illicit connections (Glanton et al., 1992). Eight months after an illicit discharge detection and elimination program began, fecal bacteria log mean concentration was reduced from 20,000 colonies/100mL to 2,000 colonies/100ml."

Thus, in this example, a 90% reduction in bacterial contamination resulted from a careful enforcement program alone.

Detention and BMP Treatment

Stormwater Detention Basins

Many of the problems of stormwater management are associated with its very irregular rate of flow. During dry periods runoff flow rates are so low that the water can be handled by existing sanitary wastewater treatment systems. During rainstorms, the water comes so fast that municipalities have had difficulty doing anything beyond avoiding floods.

The first step toward dealing with this problem is to increase infiltration—substantial reductions in the peak flow rates are possible. The second approach is to provide storage systems that will hold water back during the peak flow periods. Detention basins will reduce peak flows, collect trash, provide quiet water for settlement of particles and their associated pollutants, and promote infiltration. Analysis of the

National BMP Database (Strecker et al., 2003) shows that detention basins infiltrate an average of 30% of the water they receive.

The primary difficulty with this approach is the shortage of available sites to construct large reservoirs. The topography of the Los Angeles area does not include any deep canyons in lower reaches of the rivers that could easily be made into reservoirs. Moreover, virtually all of the land is already occupied by other uses and would accordingly be very expensive to acquire.

This means that detention basins must be conceived as a distributed network of smaller systems, with each serving multiple uses. A useful model is the Sepulveda Dam Recreational Area, which retains water during storms to prevent downstream flooding. For the great majority of the days in the year, the basin is mostly empty, and serves as a park and a wildlife refuge.

A rough estimate of the general feasibility of a regional-park-based approach can be calculated. The City of Los Angeles currently has about 5% of its area in parks (Wolch et al., 2002) and it is reasonable to presume that at least a similar fraction is park throughout the LA Region. Thus, moving the rainfall from adjacent developed areas to the parks would constitute concentration of the flow by a factor of 20 (20 acres of land would drain to 1 acre of park). If the runoff coefficient for the developed areas is 0.5, a rainfall of ¾ inch would thus put 8 inches of water in the parks. This is less than the 24-inch depth of flooding assumed for the stormwater parks planned in the Sun Valley project, suggesting that this approach is feasible on the large scale in terms of the amount of land required.

This calculation is quite approximate: the runoff coefficient is uncertain, and several other factors are poorly known. Never the less, the calculation suggests that a joint program could simultaneously provide the region with needed parks and needed stormwater infiltration capacity.

Sanitary Treatment of Dry Weather Flows

During dry weather, small flows are present in the stormwater system as a result of overwatering of lawns, car washing, and other discharges. This modest amount of water can be collected and passed through existing wastewater treatment plants, which commonly have more than enough excess capacity for this purpose. Because the dry season in Southern California is very long, this would prevent runoff pollution of the oceans for much of the year.

Where this is done, street washing with recycled water would be possible. Collecting and treating the contaminants during dry periods would leave the streets clean for the rainstorms, when the water cannot be collected.

Treatment Wetlands

Wetlands remove many pollutants from the water that passes through them. The low flow velocities allow sediments to settle, removing particulates and any pollutants that are adsorbed on them. Algae and rooted plants absorb nitrate and phosphate as they grow. Vigorous microbiological activity degrades organic chemicals, as microbial predators consume disease organisms. These observations suggest that wetlands can be constructed to serve as treatment systems for stormwater and dry weather runoff. While this approach requires dedication of land, it has the considerable secondary benefit of providing riparian wildlife habitat and esthetic values.

A system of treatment wetlands has been designed for the San Diego Creek Watershed that drains to Newport Bay, in Orange County, California. The system will serve an area of 120 square miles, and is expected to cost in the low tens of millions of dollars. It is expected to meet the low-flow nitrogen TMDL, the phosphorus TMDL during most years, and the fecal coliform TMDL during low flows.

A similar system has been constructed to provide stormwater quality protection for the Ballona Wetlands Watershed in the City of Los Angeles.

BMP Treatment of Flows from Problem Watersheds such as Industrial Areas

If source control is not successful for some industrial areas, it may be necessary to collect the runoff water and use more sophisticated BMP treatment. These might best be constructed as private facilities serving a consortium of local industries, and funded by them for the purpose. A public/private partnership could be created, perhaps with public loan guarantees. Past experience with business improvement districts could serve as a model.

Partial Treatment in Curbside Units

Many proprietary devices have been developed for treatment of runoff as it enters curbside catch basins. These generally remove trash from the flow, and may also collect sediments. Some include adsorbants to remove hydrocarbons and trace metals. They have the disadvantage that they are designed to bypass during higher volume wet-weather flows. All require some degree of maintenance, and some are expensive to install. Trash and sediment must be removed on a regular basis, and adsorbants must be replaced when they are exhausted. Never the less, they may be useful for treatment of problem dry weather flows in specific areas, such as industrial or commercial zones.

Public Outreach and Education

Much of the pollution in runoff water arises from actions of individuals—litter is discarded in the street, for example, or pesticides are used carelessly in a residential garden. This pollutant load can be reduced by educating citizens and urging them to behave in a way that protects water quality.

An effort in Oregon, conducted by the Tillamook Bay Rural Clean Water Project, was made to educate local farmers about the steps they could take to protect local streams. This involved personal visits, tours of successful BMPs, newsletters, and presentations (USEPA, 1999). Four years after the program began, bacterial concentrations dropped 40% to 60% in Tillamook Bay and 50% to 80% in local rivers. Thus in some cases significant progress can be made at very low cost through public education.

Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

While the behavior of individual citizens may be difficult to control, municipalities have far more control over their own operations. Efforts can be made to avoid careless use of pesticides and fertilizers on municipal facilities. Such steps have modest, but measurable impacts. An EPA report notes (USEPA, 1999):

> "…the City of Bellevue, Washington, found that street cleaning three times a week removed about only 10% of urban runoff pollutants; catch basin cleaning

twice a year was estimated to be about 25% effective" (Pitt and Bissonnette, 1984).

Combined Approaches for Stormwater Quality Management

A general classification of rainfall receivers and appropriate methods for dealing with runoff they produce is shown in Figure 1. While the approach it describes is quite general, and other mixes of alternatives are possible, it shows one set of measures that can be used to control stormwater pollution.

Streets

The first step in reducing pollutants on streets is to restrict pollutant discharges from adjacent properties. Source control measures should prevent the release of industrial pollutants and construction sites should be managed to contain sediments. Litter laws and pet dropping collection laws should be enforced, although it must be acknowledged that it is not possible to prevent these inputs entirely. To stop litter from entering the storm drains, cities should install half-centimeter screens on their catch basins. The use of such screens will require diligent street cleaning, to ensure that the drains are not blocked during storms. In Southern California, rains mostly occur during a well-defined season, and frequently weather reports give two or three days warning of major storms. Cities should develop contingency plans for rapid-response street cleaning when storms are coming, to minimize stormwater contamination and the chances of flooding caused by clogged screens.

In some areas, where runoff water quality is relatively good, the streets themselves might be used as groundwater recharge facilities, by converting unused alleys to park/detention basins or by using permeable pavements.

It remains likely, however, that much street runoff will be of marginal quality. For the immediate future, it is also likely that a major portion of runoff from other sources will be initially discharged to streets, so that efforts to make use of stormwater as a water resource will require collection, and a degree of treatment before infiltration.

In most cases, this can be done with regional solutions. Water from storm drains can be collected in detention basins and wetlands, where sedimentation and biological activity will reduce pollutant load, and groundwater recharge can occur. The detention basins will serve as parks during the greater part of the year when water is not present, and the wetlands will double as much-needed wildlife habitat.

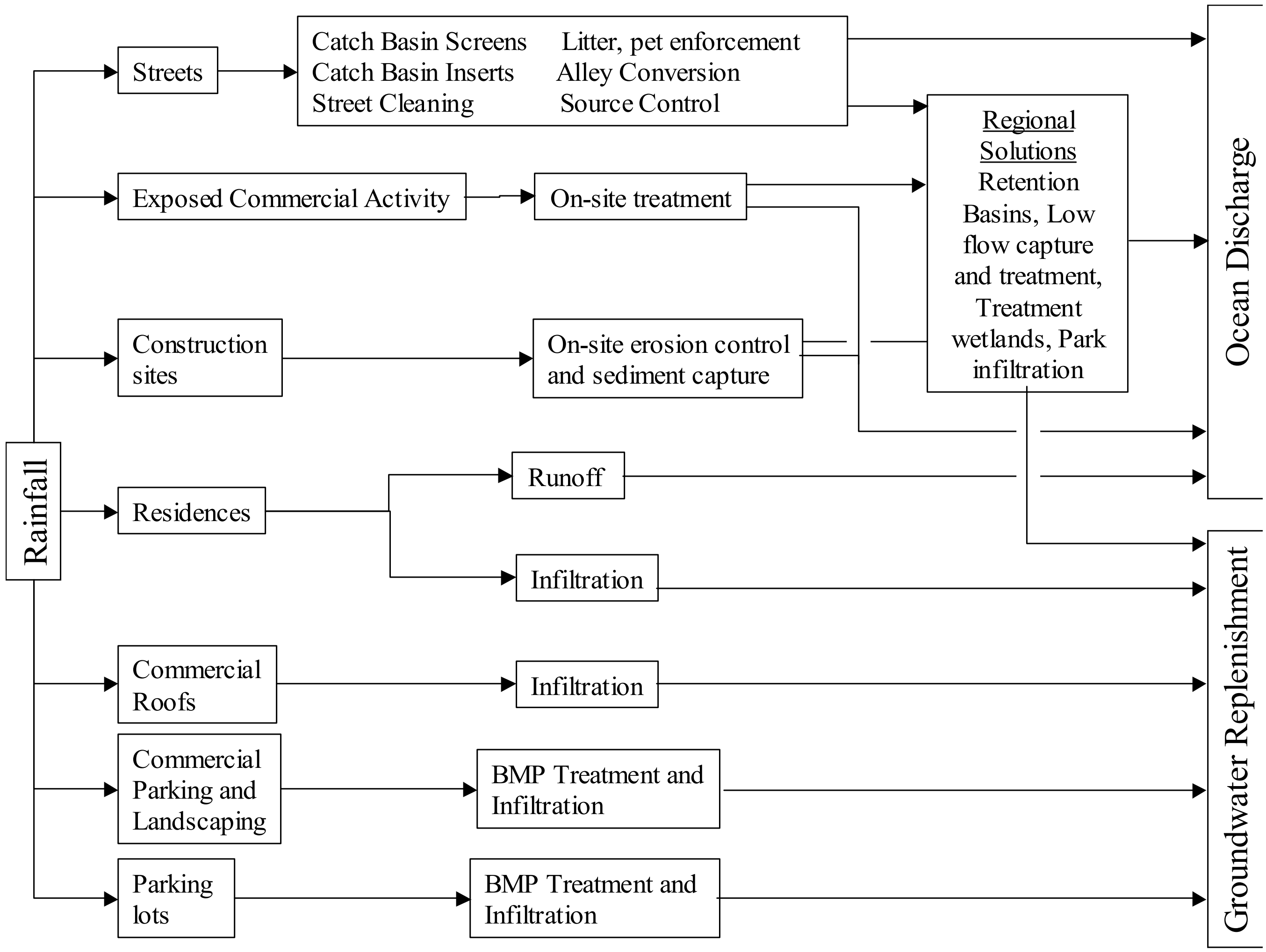

Figure 1. Stormwater quality control solutions for Southern California

Alleys for Public Use and Infiltration

Some alleys in urban areas are no longer necessary for access purposes. Indeed, many have become nuisance areas because of illicit trash disposal and criminal activity. Many of these could be gated and converted to small parks, with keys provided for local residents. They could simultaneously serve as infiltration facilities or as bioswales. There are currently 2.3 square miles of alleys in Los Angeles, for example. While many must be retained for access purposes, the fraction that could be converted could constitute a significant stormwater retention and infiltration resource. Alleys maintained for access might be candidates for partial or permeable pavements.

Similar approaches could be used for power line rights-of-way.

Exposed Commercial Activity

Very often the cheapest approach to stormwater quality control for exposed commercial activities is simply to cover them. Stormwater will thereafter come in contact only with the rooftop, and runoff will be much less polluted and more easily dealt with. However, for some large-scale activities, such as oil refining, it is not physically possible to provide a roof. For others, such as auto dismantling, the large area needed and the relatively low value of the activity may mean that a roof is not financially possible. Such facilities must be required to collect and treat runoff from their facilities, and indeed this is already being done in many cases. While there certainly are costs involved, it has generally proven possible, through a combination of better housekeeping, substitution of non-polluting materials, and simple on-site treatment processes, to solve these problems. Requirements for on-site treatment are advantageous because the cost of such treatment is borne by the business that produces the pollutant, providing incentives for conversion to less-polluting products and methods. Consequently, green manufacturing will become increasingly common.

Construction Sites

Release of sediments from construction sites can be ameliorated if the construction crew provides erosion control measures, such as maintaining vegetation or spraying exposed soil with polymer stabilizers, and an adequate on-site retention pond for rainfall, along with dikes, silt fences, and appropriate vehicle entrance construction to prevent runoff. Detention allows the sediments to settle out and the exposed soils can function effectively for groundwater recharge. It is anticipated that the costs of these measures will be small in comparison to construction costs. A more detailed list of best management practices for construction sites appears in Appendix I.

Residences

In most cases, homes and the surrounding landscaping have been designed to facilitate rapid runoff. It is necessary that water not pool in depths sufficient to flood houses, and ponding is viewed with irritation, even if it is harmless and temporary. However, single-family homes typically are surrounded with a significant area of land that could serve well for infiltration. Commonly, the land is planted or covered with grass. The runoff from landscaping and residential rooftops typically contains only small amounts of pollutants that are readily removed by percolation through the root zone.

Landscaping for the typical single-family home could be arranged to infiltrate all of the rainfall that it receives (except, perhaps, in the most severe storms). Lawns a few inches below surrounding sidewalks could serve as infiltration ponds, gardens could receive roof runoff, and downspouts could conduct runoff to dry wells. Because the water would have had very little contact with pollutants, such infiltration would be an excellent addition to groundwater resources.

However, very few residences are arranged in this manner and, indeed, building codes often specify features that promote rapid runoff to the street. Building codes should be changed to utilize single-family homes as recharge sites. It is anticipated, however, that the effect on runoff will be seen only slowly in built-up areas as old homes are gradually replaced. Retrofit of existing homes will be expensive and politically difficult, but for new construction, single-family homes could be made to produce essentially zero discharge at little or no additional cost.

Xeriscaping—planting with native and other drought-tolerant plants—can also help to provide space for water infiltration, and it reduces watering and therefore the chance of irrigation runoff. Such landscaping also requires less fertilizer and pesticide, and so reduces incidental contamination.

In many cases, cities may be able to take interim steps to reduce runoff from homes. They have control over the "city strip" land that lies between the sidewalk and the gutter. It would be possible to institute a program of replacing the lawns after minor excavation, so that these areas would lie below the sidewalk and curb and serve as runoff detention and percolation basins.

Where infiltration is not possible, much residential runoff may be acceptable for direct discharge to the ocean, as long as it is not contaminated first by passing through polluted streets. More contaminated water can be conveyed to regional water cleanup and recharge facilities.

Low-flow Treatment in Wastewater Treatment Plants

Wastewater treatment plants are built with excess capacity in order to handle increased flow during rainy weather. While sanitary systems are designed to exclude stormwater, holes in manhole covers, leaks in piping, and illegal connections all allow the entry of some water during rainstorms. The flow is a very small portion of the rainwater, but can produce a significant increase in the much smaller sanitary flows—sometimes up to 50%. Treatment plants are designed with excess capacity to handle these peak loads.

This excess capacity can be used to treat dry weather runoff during periods when there is no rain. While these flows are not, by definition, stormwater, and indeed are governed by a separate set of regulations, dry weather runoff is often a significant contributor to impairment of receiving waters and its treatment would contribute to the objectives of stormwater control. It is also possible to use this capacity in concert with "street washing". In this approach, tank trucks filled with recycled water could be used to wash the streets, particularly in the months before the first rain of the fall. Contaminants removed from the streets and drains by the washing would be treated in the wastewater plants, leaving the streets far cleaner when the rains came. At present, municipal street cleaning is a prohibited activity where it results in flows to the storm drain system.

This treatment approach for dry weather runoff could also treat runoff from small rainstorms.

It is likely that all of dry weather runoff could be treated for much of the Los Angeles Region. Such a step would eliminate essentially all runoff pollutants in the areas where this is possible. Because this approach uses capacity that is already in place, the cost for this alternative is low.

This approach would be particularly significant for control of coliforms. Sanitary treatment of dry weather flows would eliminate coliforms through much of the year. Rain occurs during only 32 days of the year, on average (Some of these storms are so small that the runoff could still be treated. On the other hand, untreatably high levels of runoff typically continue for a few days after a major storm). The LA Regional Water Board allows variances for 17 days of wet weather flow during the year. Thus it seems likely that dry weather runoff treatment at wastewater treatment plants, plus some degree of source control, plus the variances, will be sufficient to bring most areas into compliance with the bacteria rules. Further study, including some basic research on the sources of coliforms, is necessary to confirm this.

In considering the acceptability of this approach, it is important to note that beach use declines during wet weather, so that closures during the variance days would have a small effect on overall beach use and public health.

Capture and Use of Rooftop Runoff

In many cases, the pollutants from commercial rooftops, like those from residential roofs, could be readily removed by soil infiltration. With appropriate controls to avoid specific pollutants from commercial activities, roof runoff could be used for groundwater recharge. Designs exist for infiltration planters, in which the planter has high sides that allow it to function as a reservoir, and an open bottom that allows infiltrating water to pass into the soil. Risks of groundwater pollution could be mitigated through the use of biologically active and adsorbant soils. Commercial rooftops are commonly associated with large parking areas, which could be adapted for infiltration. Such efforts will be more difficult than those for homes, because most commercial facilities have a higher ratio of roof area to land area. In some cases it may be possible to store runoff for future irrigation use.

The Washington State Department of Ecology (2001) has developed a decision tree for dealing with downspout discharges. For lots larger than 22,000 square feet, it specifies either dispersion or infiltration systems for runoff. For smaller lots on suitable soil, infiltration systems are required. Where soils do not readily accept infiltration, surface dispersion may be appropriate. If water quality is good and infiltration and dispersal are not possible, disposal to the storm drains is accepted.

Parking Lots and Landscaping

Parking areas occupy a very large amount of land in Southern California, and accordingly represent a significant opportunity for improvement in stormwater management. Construction costs for parking lots are far smaller per square foot than those for buildings, so that alterations are cheaper. They are reconstructed more frequently, so that requirements applying to new construction or reconstruction will propagate through the parking lot inventory much more rapidly than those for buildings.

In most cases, parking lots could serve as sites for rainwater infiltration. Trash can be collected on grates and be disposed of properly by the lot owners. The curbs around plantings (which are often necessary to avoid damage to the plants from cars) can be slotted so that water passes through them to infiltrate in the planter soils. Planted areas must be below grade, so that they collect and temporarily store water, and could be expanded, utilizing more space where cars don't actually park, such as the areas between and behind the parking bumpers. In some areas, permeable pavements could be used. Collected water could be passed to leach fields built under the parking lot.

An example of this sort of development is provided by the 6-acre parking lot of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (NRDC, 1999). It had originally been proposed as a traditional design, with water draining to catch basins, storm drains, and eventually the Willamette River. At the request of the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, it was redesigned to use vegetated medians and landscaping as swales and linear wetlands. The parking lot is now able to infiltrate the water from a storm of 0.83 inches in 24 hours. Overall construction costs for the revised design were actually lower, because of the reduced costs for catch basins and drains.

Pervious pavements have also been developed so that even the space where cars are parked can be used for infiltration.

There is some concern over whether infiltration from parking lots will pollute underlying aquifers. Sediments, hydrocarbons, and trace metals are likely to be present in parking lot runoff from ordinary commercial establishments. But all of these are generally well retained on soils, particularly if the soils are selected to serve this purpose. Adsorbent materials might be added as a surface layer, to further retain hydrocarbons and trace metals.

It will be necessary to develop new guidelines for parking lots. The public and lot owners will not tolerate flooding that requires them to wade to their cars, so detention and infiltration systems will have to be carefully designed. Overflow will occur in extreme storms, and the lot and remediation areas should be designed so that the excess water flows to the street without impeding access to parked vehicles. Redesigned lots can be required for any new construction or for major renovations, but complete retrofit of all lots is likely to be too expensive for political acceptance.

This will require some additional maintenance. If adsorbants are included in the recharge areas to help control hydrocarbon infiltration, for example, these will have to be renewed from time to time. Regular trash collection will be required.

It is anticipated that most parking lots could become zero runoff areas, contributing substantially to water conservation and pollutant remediation. Further, very large parking lots, such as those at "big box" stores and shopping malls, could be reconstructed as stormwater infiltration facilities serving surrounding neighborhoods. In a cap and trade system, the lots would become financial opportunities for the retailers.

River Greening

The Los Angeles Region has become infamous for its historical conversion of rivers to concrete-lined flood control channels. While these have served the purpose of moving water rapidly to the ocean and avoiding flooding, they have also prevented infiltration in the riverbed. For this and many other reasons, advocates have proposed "greening" the river. This would involve widening the river at some points and replacing the steep concrete walls with gently sloping vegetated shores. Parks and wildlife habitat could be developed alongside the river, designed such that they would flood when the river is high. This would allow infiltration to occur, and by providing temporary storage, would decrease peak flood flows. In many areas it may be possible to replace the concrete bottoms of rivers with permeable surfaces.

The Sepulveda Dam Recreation Area is an excellent example of such a facility. It stores water during heavy rains, but serves as a park and wildlife refuge during the greater part of the year when it is not flooded. It promotes infiltration of water during rain events.

Certainly, any such modifications of the rivers must be designed carefully so that flood risk is not increased. But this is clearly possible. Indeed, increased infiltration and storage capacity along the river will reduce peak flows and therefore the frequency of floods, and reduce the associated costs.

Infiltration in Residential Streets

Many areas in Southern California are primarily residential, and runoff from these areas is only moderately polluted—it could be used for direct infiltration without treatment. In newly developed areas, homes could be designed so the runoff is near zero. However, many areas are currently already built out. In these, preventing runoff to the street would be expensive. In many cases, it may be possible to install infiltration devices in the public streets.

Infiltration in Parks

Public parks, in most cases consisting predominantly of grassy areas, are already contributing to groundwater infiltration. However, some portions still contribute to runoff, and could be regraded to collect water rather than shedding it. Indeed, many could be rebuilt to serve as groundwater infiltration systems serving surrounding areas. Playgrounds could be sunk below surrounding areas in order to collect water during rainfall events. Designs would have to include provision for infiltration at acceptable rates—water left standing for days could become a nuisance. In some areas, soil conditions might preclude this approach.

During the few days after water is collected and before it percolates, that area of the park will be unavailable for other uses. However, parks are little used during rainy weather in any case, and detention will only occur on a few days each year, so the interference will be minimal.

Public Facilities

Runoff from public facilities could be reduced by many of the measures previously discussed. Parking lots could be used for infiltration and rooftop runoff could go to planters serving as infiltration systems. Retrofit of government facilities could begin more quickly than for individual homes, as part of the effort required to meet regulations.

PRIMARY BENEFITS OF RUNOFF QUALITY CONTROL

The immediate purpose of runoff quality control is protection of the receiving waters. In the Los Angeles Region, this refers primarily to rivers, coastal wetlands, bays, and the ocean. Many benefits are definable.

Fishing

Pollutants in stormwater can adversely affect fishing. Commercial fishing is a small and declining industry in the waters local to Southern California, but sportfishing remains a significant activity, bringing income to coastal businesses and providing recreational opportunity for many people. Cleanup of stormwater will preserve and enhance this activity by ensuring that fish are safe for consumption and by preserving fish breeding grounds in estuaries.

Swimming

Ocean swimming, as part of a visit to the beach, is a recreational activity enjoyed by millions of people each year in Southern California. It attracts tourists who contribute substantially to coastal economies. It is discouraged if trash litters the beach or if fear of disease discourages water contact. It is prevented entirely in the event of beach closures, which are a common result of polluted stormwater runoff.

Boating

Powerboats and sailboats are widely used in Southern California and represent a substantial industry in manufacture, maintenance, provision of slips, and various associated shoreside activities. Polluted waters, particularly in the form of trash, can significantly degrade the quality of the boating experience.

Noncontact Recreation and Nonconsumptive Wildlife Uses

Some recreational activities involve bodies of water without contact: sitting or bicycle riding along rivers or lake shores are examples. These activities are seriously degraded if the water produces bad odors or is littered with trash. A stormwater quality program will protect and enhance these uses.

Observation of wildlife is often a valuable part of the outdoor experience. Continuation of this activity requires water quality sufficient to support birds and animals and the plants and insects that they eat. Many migratory birds are dependent on local bodies of water for their sustenance during their yearly movements.

Reduced Illness from Contaminated Seafood

Some illnesses are transmitted through consumption of contaminated seafood. Control of the microbiological quality of runoff waters will reduce the extent of such illnesses.

Reduced Illness from Swimming in Contaminated Waters

Recent studies have indicated that people swimming near storm drains are more likely to contract waterborne diseases than those swimming far from storm drains. Microbiological control of runoff quality, particularly through sanitary treatment of dry weather flows, could reduce the incidence of these diseases.

Enhanced Esthetic Values

The trash cleanup associated with stormwater quality control will improve the appearance of our harbors, rivers, streets, and commercial establishments. Esthetic enjoyment of wildlife habitats such as wetlands, in particular, is hindered if trash is present.

Preservation of Natural Ecosystems

Polluted urban runoff damages natural ecosystems in many ways: toxic material can sicken or kill organisms, trash can choke marine mammals or birds, additional turbidity can prevent the penetration of light necessary for seaweed growth, sediment can bury habitats and prevent attachment of organisms to rocky surfaces, and nutrients can fertilize overgrowth of mosses and plankton. This damage can be prevented by stormwater quality control, and is one of the prime reasons for the program.

SECONDARY BENEFITS OF STORMWATER QUALITY CONTROL

Urban runoff comes from a huge variety of sources and contacts much of the environment around us. The efforts made to clean up runoff, which have the primary purpose of preventing water pollution in receiving waters, will have many secondary benefits and these should be included in any cost-benefit analysis. Indeed, some of these benefits are so substantial that they suggest the agencies responsible for the resources in question should also be providing financial support for runoff quality control efforts.

Groundwater Restoration

Total rainfall in the Los Angeles basin in an average year is equal to about half of the amount used for drinking water supply. It is strange indeed that we pollute this water and discharge it to the ocean even as we import ecologically, politically, and financially expensive water from the Colorado River, Northern California, and the Owens Valley. The primary difficulty in making productive use of this water is the lack of storage capacity. Rainfalls are infrequent but intense: most of the time there is no rainfall available for use, but occasionally it is so abundant that it causes flooding. Surface water reservoirs are the traditional solution to this problem—water is stored during the rainy season to prevent floods and becomes available for valuable uses the weather is dry. But there are few workable sites for large, year-round surface water reservoirs in the Los Angeles area. Groundwater aquifers, however, can also serve as water reservoirs, being drawn down in the dry season and replenished during the wet season. Infiltration will constitute a use of this storage capacity, reducing future dependence on outside sources of water and avoiding expensive alternatives like desalination of seawater. Because environmental and political factors may make increasing water imports impossible at any price, better utilization of local rainfall through the use of the groundwater reservoirs may be necessary for future growth.

Improvement of groundwater supplies within Southern California would save money now spent on imported water, and would save the concomitant external costs of the environmental impact on source areas. It would also reduce political friction with source areas. Ultimately, it may be the only economically and politically feasible method by which the water supply in Southern California can be increased, and as such, it may be the key to continued development in the area.

Flood Control

As the fraction of the Los Angeles Region occupied by impermeable surface has increased, the amount of water runoff has also increased, putting an ever-growing load on the flood control system. A recent project improved flood control for the lower Los Angeles River by increasing the height of the dikes on the channels, at a cost of about $200 million. Future increases in channel capacity would be even more expensive—not only will the walls have to be made higher, several bridges will have to be raised. Increased infiltration will reduce runoff, reducing the maintenance costs on the system and eliminating the need for further capacity increases.

The possible magnitude of the impact can be judged by considering the case of the San Gabriel Valley. Runoff from the valley is mostly captured in spreading basins in the Whittier Narrows area and used for groundwater recharge. This makes the runoff coefficient for the valley overall 5%. In the urbanized areas of Los Angeles, the value is about 40%. Thus if the urbanized area were as well controlled as the San Gabriel Valley, runoff could decrease by a factor of eight. Flood risks would essentially disappear.

Increased Parkland and Wildlife Habitat

The regional alternatives for stormwater quality control include the development of parks and wetlands. The parks would serve as detention basins and infiltration facilities, but would be used for that purpose only during rainy periods, which comprise about 32 days per year in Southern California. During the rest of the year, these areas could serve the typical purposes for which parks are built, acting as recreational sites, playgrounds, soccer and baseball fields, and wildlife habitat. Because people are less likely to engage in these activities during rainstorms in any case, the conflict between the uses will be small. The Los Angeles area is notably short of public parks in comparison to other major cities, particularly in its poorer neighborhoods (Wolch et al., 2002). Because it is likely that residents will demand more park space in the future, the development of areas for dual use is particularly valuable. Ideally, the cost of development could be borne by both agencies intent on improving stormwater quality and by those responsible for parks and recreation. The planned redevelopment of the Corn Fields site in Los Angeles, for example, might provide a detention basin as well as the new park that is being planned.

Wetlands must be kept wet all year, but can withstand flooding during the rainy season. Thus reestablishment of these habitats, which have been largely lost in the Los Angeles Region, could simultaneously serve the purposes of wildlife restoration, flood control, and stormwater quality control. In many cases, it will be possible to develop wetlands within existing channels, reducing the need for additional land purchases.

Some of the parks and wetlands could be created as a part of river greening projects, and so would also serve the purposes of reestablishing esthetically appealing naturalistic rivers.

Improved Property Values from Trash Control

Often one of the most powerful visual cues that gives a visitor the perception of a "bad" neighborhood is the presence of trash on the streets. One approach to reducing pollutant discharge to storm drains will be improved enforcement of litter laws and additional street cleaning. These will have the secondary benefit of improving the appearance and livability of streets throughout the area. The "broken windows" campaigns of many police departments—indicating that improving the appearance of neighborhoods reduces crime—suggests that apparently cosmetic changes can have substantial benefits for neighborhoods. Certainly property values in a neighborhood with clean streets will be higher than they would if the streets are routinely littered with trash.

Reduction in Harbor Sedimentation

Sediments carried by runoff are moved because the water moves rapidly, and because small particles remain suspended in the low-salt-content chemical environment of fresh water. When runoff enters bays and harbors, however, the velocity of the water is slowed, allowing the particles to settle to the bottom. The higher salt content of marine waters promotes flocculation of the small particles, so that most of them will also settle to the bottom. The deposited sediment fills channels, blocking the passage of ships and recreational boats, and filling areas set aside for preservation of aquatic ecosystems. Ultimately, harbor dredging is required, and frequently the collected sediment has been contaminated, so that it requires special handling. Dredging associated with storm drains in Los Angeles Harbor, for example, costs between $1 million and $3 million per year. Sedimentation in Upper Newport Bay is considered a significant threat to its function as a wildlife refuge. Stormwater quality control measures would avoid sediments discharges or remove it from the runoff, ameliorating these problems for downstream communities.

Improved Public Health

A significant portion of exposure to particulate air pollutants arises when small particles are resuspended from roadways by traffic and wind. Tire dust, settled air pollutant particles, pet feces, particles with adsorbed trace metals and trash are pounded into fine powder and lifted into the air. Such resuspension includes an ultrafine particle fraction, which is most dangerous to human health. More frequent street cleaning, particularly using vacuum bag type cleaners, would reduce public exposure to fine materials carrying trace metals, hydrocarbons, and microorganisms. Some public health improvement is likely, but its magnitude cannot be estimated.

REGIONAL PROGRAMS DESIGNED FOR STORMWATER QUALITY CONTROL

While there has been a substantial amount of work on individual facilities for runoff quality control, such as detention ponds and grassy swales, there have been only a few studies that have tried to determine the regional cost and effectiveness for a system of these "green solutions". It is important to ask whether it is possible to create an overall program within realistic constraints of land availability and costs that will bring the watershed into compliance with regulations.

We have sought descriptions of example projects that include overall costs and the area of land that drains to the facility, so that cost per square mile of area served can be calculated. In a few cases, these are area-wide systems that are the best evidence that an overall solution is possible. In others, they are single installations, for which we make the assumption that duplication is possible—ten facilities like the one described could be built to serve ten times the area. Because economies of scale are important in determining facility design and even regulatory policy, we have taken special interest in some sources that describe how the size of the drainage area (and the necessary BMP treatment facility) affects cost per square mile. Finally, we have included examples that have actually been built and tested, and others that have only been designed. While data for the latter may be less reliable, most systems perform as designed, and these designed-but-not-built systems provide some of the most useful results.

The chosen examples are described briefly below, and listed in Table 2. Results useful for determining the relationship between facility size and cost per square mile are plotted in Figures 2 and 3.

Area-Wide Systems

Sun Valley

The Sun Valley project was funded by Los Angeles County to develop an alternative approach for flood control and runoff quality management for the Sun Valley district. This is an urbanized area with considerable industrial development that currently does not have storm drains. It is consequently frequently plagued with flooding. The project was undertaken to determine whether there was an approach to flood control other than simply building storm drains.

Four alternative plans were produced, designed to maximize infiltration, to maximize water conservation and wildlife habitat, to maximize stormwater reuse by industry, and emphasizing conveyence to traditional storm drains. Notably, an alternative that maximized the use of onsite BMPs was rejected as too expensive. The components of the plans included industrial reuse, infiltration basins in parks, tree planting and mulching, infiltration in parking lots, and infiltration in vaults beneath the streets.

Because the emphasis of this project was flood control rather than water quality control, the hydraulic control objectives were quite stringent: the system was designed to collect and infiltrate all of the water produced by a 50-year, 96 hour storm. This means that the runoff from the area, if the project is built, will be reduced to near zero. Thus, this project, which includes flood control and water quality control, constitutes an "upper bound" estimate on the costs for water quality control. Achieving such complete collection and infiltration would certainly substantially exceed water quality goals, and costs for a stormwater quality control system in an area with storm drains already in place would certainly be lower.

San Diego Creek

A project supported by the Irvine Ranch Water District and Orange County and performed by Geosyntec Consultants has developed a plan for natural treatment systems—wetlands and stormwater detention ponds—for the San Diego Creek watershed. This watershed occupies 120 square miles of developed land that drains into Newport Bay. Newport Bay has been designated as impaired, requiring that stormwater discharges be cleaned up.

Geosyntec proposed a plan consisting of 44 facilities, including ponds and wetlands constructed within existing drainage channels or built outside. These are typically facilities with both deeper open water and shallow water supporting emergent vegetation (such as cattails).

Water quality improvements expected from the system are described in the report (Strecker et al., 2002): "The NTS Plan is estimated to achieve total nitrogen (TN) TMDL for base flows and reduce in-stream TN concentration below current standards at most locations. Total phosphorous TMDL targets would be met in all but the wettest years. The fecal coliform TMDL would be met during the dry season, but not all wet season base flow conditions, and not under storm conditions. The NTS Plan is not designed to meet the sediment TMDL, but would capture, on average, about 1,9000 tons/yr (1,724,000 kg/yr) of sediment from urban areas. The wetlands are estimated to remove 11% of the total copper and lead, and 18% of the total zinc in storm runoff. The NTS provides a cost-effective alternative to routing dry-weather flows to the sanitary treatment system."

While final budget numbers were not provided, it was anticipated that the first 13 treatment sites would be constructed for \$12 million, and that the overall cost would be substantially less that the \$60 million anticipated for low-flow sanitary treatment. This value is listed as the upper bound of cost in Table 2. For comparison of cost vs. unit drainage area size, it was presumed that the average area served by each of the 44 facilities was $120\ mi^2/44 = 2.7\ mi^2$.

Constructed wetlands will collect any trash that enters the storm drain, and should be effective at reducing concentrations of coliform organisms, hydrocarbons, particles, and the suite of pollutants associated with particles. They may constitute a complete control system if they are combined with vigorous source control for metals and pesticides and storm drain screens to minimize the trash loading.

Murray City, Utah, Golf Course and Wetlands

Officials in Murray City recognized an opportunity when the interstate highway I-215 was being built. They agreed to take soil from the excavation and runoff water from the freeway to make a golf course. The links, with an associated string of settling ponds, accept and treat all of the drain water from the eastbound lanes of 4.5 miles of the freeway (NRDC, 1999; Hill, 2003). The golf course has been a commercial success, and now produces \$900,000 in revenue against \$450,000 in operating and maintenance costs each year. The city has created other treatment wetlands for essentially all of the runoff from the City and from the westbound lanes of the freeway. The total cost of these wetlands has been less than $1,000,000. Overall, if the golf course infiltration system and the other wetlands are considered as a single stormwater control system, it pays for itself. Because this is an unusual circumstance, for calculation we ignored the income from the golf course, and presume the wetlands cost $1,000,000 and serve the area of Murray City, which is 9.5 mi^2.

Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District

The Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District serves the area including and surrounding the city of Fresno. It operates 130 infiltration basins that drain a region of about 120 square miles devoted to agriculture, residential areas, and urban landscape (NRDC, 1999; Pomaville, 2003). Some of the basins are turfed and serve as parks, while others are bare and serve seasonal infiltration needs. The basins succeed in infiltrating 80% to 90% of the stormwater in their drainage areas, and only 2% enters a receiving water without receiving some degree of treatment. To protect groundwater, the District also instituted a program of industrial inspections. While monitoring is still done to check for pollution of the San Joaquin River, the District anticipates no additional infrastructure will be necessary to meet water quality control regulations. For calculations, the unit area for each basin was assumed to be 1 mi^2.

Individual Systems

Long Lake Retrofit, Littleton, Massachusetts

Geosyntec Consultants also designed a low-impact-development program for Littleton, Massachusetts (Roy et al., 2003). The 1.5-square-mile watershed that contains the town drains into Long Lake, which has been subject to eutrophication and other water quality problems associated with urban runoff. The storm drain system collects water at 200 catch basins and releases it to the lake through 18 outfalls. The plan for mitigation of the problem includes a treatment wetland, grass and vegetated swales, bioretention cells (swales with underdrains), rain gardens, rain barrels, and an outreach program to promote source control for fertilizers.

The total budget for the project is estimated at $630,000, or $420,000 per square mile.

Tule Pond, Alameda, California

The Tule Ponds project is a group of three treatment wetlands that was constructed using information developed in the Demonstration Urban Storm Water Treatment Marsh in the early 1980s. It receives urban runoff, passing it through the three ponds in series and discharging it to an existing natural pond. It serves a drainage area of 0.8 square miles and cost $360,000, for a cost of $450,000 per square mile.

Treasure lsland, San Francisco Bay

Treasure Island is an artificial island of 403 acres in San Francisco Bay that was used for many years as a Navy base. It has recently been converted to residential use. A treatment wetland is planned as the means for stormwater quality control. It is anticipated that wetland construction will cost $800,000 to $ 1,100,000 (Bachand, 2003), or $1.2 million to $1.7 million per square mile. However, the island is a tourist destination, and it has been estimated that the increase in visitor spending associated with the wetland could be $4 million to $11 million (Fine, 2003). It was also estimated that the overall value of the project could be twice these values.

Herrerra Study of Stormwater Regulations Costs

As a part of the effort to determine the costs of complying with stormwater regulations in Western Washington, Herrerra Environmental Consultants (2001) prepared designs for typical projects needed to contain and treat stormwater on site in small projects of new construction. In both cases, the systems were planned for a 1.7-inch rainfall. The first hypothetical project was a ten-acre residential development with 40 individual home sites. It was presumed that runoff from the homes would be collected in a detention pond. Construction of the permanent facilities was determined to cost $240,000 to $230,000, depending on the quality of soils. This is about $15 million per square mile.

The second hypothetical site was a restaurant built on a one-acre site, with the area not occupied by the building used as a parking lot. Runoff was to be collected in subsurface infiltration vaults. Costs were determined to be $280,000 or $570,000, depending on the permeability of the soil, or $175 million to $356 million.

Dover Mall, Delaware

The Dover Mall has 30 acres of parking lot or otherwise impermeable surface. Runoff drains to a wetland that is sized to retain a 1-inch rainfall (NRDC, 1999). It includes a forebay that allows containment of exceptional spills. The total project cost was $171,000 (although much of this was defrayed by in-kind donations). The wetland is considered a considerable esthetic resource. The cost was $3.5 million per square mile.

Oakland Park Industrial Area, Florida

A BMP treatment system was developed for five acres of Oakland Park that included auto repair shops, paint shops and plating facilities. A short treatment train was developed, including a trash removal basin and absorbent media. The system cost $261,000, and was successful in removing 71% to 95% of oil and grease, along with all trash and most sediment. Costs were $33 million per square mile of drainage.

Clear Lake Packed Bed Wetland Filter System

Clear Lake, in Orlando, Florida, receives runoff water from 121 acres of nearby urban land and water quality in the lake has deteriorated significantly as a result of pollution. Packed beds, consisting of 10 filter beds composed of crushed concrete or granite media with growing aquatic plants, allow removal of sediments and nutrients. An initial wet detention pond is used to contain the first flush. The system cost $917,646. In calculations, the system was considered a single installation treating 121 acres of drainage. Costs were $4.6 million per square mile.

Sand Filters in Alexandria, Virginia

Two sand filters were built to treat runoff from an airport parking lot near National Airport in Alexandria, Virginia. The area drained was 1.95 acres, and the filters cost $40,000. While some initial problems with anaerobic conditions were encountered, the filters eventually achieved good treatment. The cost, calculated from the data reported by FHWA (2003), was $12.9 million per square mile.

Compost Filter Facility, Hillsboro, Oregon

A compost filter was constructed to decontaminate water upstream of a grassy swale. The treatment train received water from a five-lane highway, draining a total area of 74 acres. The 1200-square-foot filter contained 120 cubic yards of compost and was constructed and filled for \$13,700. The cost, not including the swale, was thus \$110,000 per square mile of drainage area.

Infiltration Trenches

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA 2003) has estimated the costs for constructing infiltration trenches as $C_A = 1317 \times V^{(0.63)}$ where C is the cost in dollars and V is the volume in cubic meters. Calculations for this report are made assuming the need to provide detention for a ¾-inch storm. For one square mile (2.6×10^6 m^2), a ¾-in rainstorm will produce 5×10^4 m^3 of water. The cost per square mile is equal to the cost for each trench divided by the drainage area it serves, or $C_{mi2} = C_A/A = (1/A) \times 1317 \times V^{(0.63)} = 1.2 \times 10^6 \times A^{(-0.37)}$. The total cost for these systems thus declines as each system becomes larger—there are economies of scale. Costs for land are not included, but it is likely that trenches could be installed in land also used for other purposes. In some cases it might be necessary to collect more than ¾ inch of rain. On the other hand, the calculation assumes that no infiltration occurs in the trench during the storm. Also, this presumes that the runoff coefficient for the area served is 1.0—thus the typical systems described could treat a ¾-inch storm on totally impervious area or a 1.5-inch storm on an area with a runoff coefficient of 0.5, which is a commonly observed value. Thus the total seems a reasonable approximation.

Infiltration Basins

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA 2003) has estimated costs for construction of open infiltration basins (dry basins) as $C = (V/0.02832)^{(0.69)}$, where C is the cost in dollars and V is the volume in cubic meters. As for the infiltration trenches, it is assumed the basins will be designed to treat a ¾-inch storm in an impervious drainage. Thus the cost per square mile is $C_{mi2} = C_A/A = (1/A) \times (V/0.02832)^{(0.69)} = 204{,}000 \times A^{(-0.31)}$. Costs for land are not included, and would be substantial. However, the basins could be used for other purposes for much of the year. Again, the systems assumed could treat a 1.5-inch storm in a drainage area with a runoff coefficient of 0.5.

Bioretention Areas

Stormwater can be collected in areas filled with highly permeable soils and planted with trees and other vegetation. Water that infiltrates is filtered by contact with the soils and may continue to move downward to replenish the groundwater. Much of it will also be taken up by the vegetation and returned to the atmosphere through evapotranspiration. The FHWA (2003) cost estimate for these bioretention areas is \$10,000 per impervious acre, or \$6.2 million per square mile of impervious watershed. Bioretention areas can readily serve multiple purposes as wildlife habitat and parks.

Detention and Retention Wetlands

The Federal Highway Commission Report (FHWA, 2003) has provided a general formula describing the cost of detention ponds as a function of size. Costs were estimated as $C_A = 168\times V^{(0.699)}$, where C_A is the cost in dollars and V is the volume of the pond in cubic meters. The cost per square mile is $C_{mi2} = C_A/A = (1/A) \times 168 \times V^{(0.699)} =$

$324{,}000 \times A^{(-0.301)}$. Land costs are not included, but these areas can serve other purposes during the larger part of the year when the weather is dry—they can be parks, wildlife areas, and playing fields.

Detention Vaults

In highly urbanized areas, water can be detained in underground vaults, which may be made of concrete or of corrugated steel pipe. Such systems primarily store water to avoid flooding or excessive hydraulic load on downstream systems, but some sedimentation may occur. This provides marginal treatment, but also requires that the vaults be cleaned out on a regular basis. The FHWA estimate for costs of such systems is $C = 38.1\times(V/0.02832)^{(0.6816)}$. Cost per square mile of drainage area is $C_{mi2} = (1/A) \times 38.1 \times (V/0.02832)^{(0.6816)} = 690{,}000 \times A^{(-0.3184)}$.

Underground Sand Filters

Sand filters are quite effective at removing particulates from urban stormwater, and are commonly employed upstream of other systems in order to protect them from excessive sedimentation. They can be installed underground in densely urban areas, but are correspondingly expensive. The FHWA estimate for such systems is $10,000 to $14,000 per impervious acre served, or $8.7 million per square mile. Here we have chosen the upper estimate because costs are likely to be high in the Los Angeles area.

Surface Sand Filters

Sand filters may also be constructed at the surface, which reduces their cost. However, they occupy a relative large amount of land area, and cannot contribute to a secondary use. There are strong economies of scale. For facilities serving more than 5 impervious acres, the FHWA estimate of cost is $3,400 per acre or $2.1 million per square mile.

Dry Swales and Filter Strips

A vegetated dry swale is an area of land shaped so that stormwater flows through it in a broad, relative flat stream. Flow through the grass removes sediments from the water. At the same time, significant amounts of infiltration may occur. It may be necessary to prepare the soils to maximize infiltration before the grass is planted. Swales can be used for other purposes during the periods when it is not raining. The FHWA estimate of construction costs for swales is $1500 per impervious acre, or $930,000 per square mile.

Filter strips are similar installations, in which the water flows as a flat sheet. The FHWA estimate of constructions costs for filter strips is $2000 per acre or $1,240,000 per square mile.

Results from the ASCE-EPA BMP Database

A cooperative effort of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has compiled data on the success of best management practices. Data were carefully vetted, put as much as possible in common format, and arranged so that they could be searched according to several parameters. Several searches of the database were done to gather data for this study.

A search for dry detention basins, serving watersheds of 0-100,000 acres, with 0-30 in annual rainfall, produced 17 responses, of which only four included cost data. All of the four were associated with freeways and served small watersheds of 1-14 acres. This may be the reason why costs were exceptionally high.

A search for wetlands, serving watersheds of 0-100,000 acres, with 0-30 in annual rainfall, produced 10 responses, only one of which included cost data. Costs for this facility were exceptionally low. It was described as a "natural" wetland, perhaps implying that much of the system was already in place before construction was done.

A search for wetlands, draining 0-100,000 acres, with 0-30 in annual rainfall, produced 9 responses, including 6 with cost data. These also served very small watersheds, and costs per square mile were very high.

A search for hydrodynamic devices serving 0-100,000 acres, in areas of 0-30 in annual rainfall, produced 12 responses, including 8 with cost data. Costs ranged from $344,000 per square mile to $86 million per square mile, showing very strong economies of scale.

A search for grassy swales serving 0-100,000 acres, in areas of 0-30 in rainfall, produced 26 responses, including 7 with cost data. The cost per square mile ranged from $12 million to $341 million, and showed strong economies of scale. This was a surprising result—grassy swales are very simple and cheaply constructed systems—but it reflects the fact that each installation serves only very small areas.

ESTIMATES OF COSTS AND RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Ultimately, stormwater pollution is a symptom of two anthropogenic changes: we are releasing pollutants into our local environment, and we have disrupted the hydrologic cycle of the Los Angeles Region by covering the soil with impervious surfaces. These changes have other symptoms as well. Local pollution impairs health, damages the esthetic quality of life, and reduces property values. Reducing infiltration increases runoff rates and the risk of flooding, and at the same time, reduces recharge of groundwater resources. Finally, impervious surfaces cannot support vegetation, and we suffer the loss of natural habitat, recreational areas, and aesthetic value of green space.

Cost Estimates

The solution proposed in the report by Gordon et al. (2002)—advanced treatment plants to clean up stormwater after it has entered the storm drains—constitutes treatment of a single symptom without correction of the fundamental problem. It is expensive, and has little benefit beyond the single objective of protecting receiving waters. A more fundamental approach—eliminating pollutant releases and restoring the hydrologic cycle—is cheaper. Further, because it will mitigate all of the effects of pollution and hydrologic disruption, it will have benefits whose value exceeds the costs.

While a rudimentary cost-benefit analysis is attempted here, the limitations of such an approach should be kept in mind. Many costs and benefits are difficult to evaluate—the psychological benefit to citizens who live on a clean street rather than a trashy one, for example, or the long term effects on local business of a general perception of regulatory burdens. In past cost-benefit analyses, it has been common that costs and benefits that are difficult to measure have been assumed to be zero, certainly producing misleading results. It remains true that two good-faith investigators can produce quite different cost-benefit results, especially for a complex problem like stormwater quality control. Assumptions may depend greatly on the value system of the investigators. A recent cost-benefit study was criticized, for example, because it put a lower value on the lives of elderly persons. This is reasonable in the sense that the death of and older person represents fewer years of life lost, and less loss of earnings, and it is a common presumption in cost-benefit studies. However, there was outrage among those who felt that this approach was offensive to the elderly and the general principle that we all have equal rights.

In this particular study, because the costs and expenditures are of many different kinds, it was necessary to use a variety of estimation methods. The results are necessarily approximate, and comparisons among them must be viewed with caution. To use technical terms, contingent valuation studies are included with benefits transfer estimates, and results from various investigators are combined. We anticipate that these steps may be criticized, but we hope that we can provide a framework approach that can be improved and refined as further research is done.

Finally, cost-benefit analysis frequently ignores the issues that arise because the costs and benefits are not borne by the same parties. One might suggest that pollution should not be cleaned up if the cost of doing so exceeds the benefits of relief from the pollution. But it is commonly the case that the polluter who is saving money is not the same person who is suffering from the effects of the pollution. Does your neighbor have the right to throw his trash in your yard if he can show that it saves him more money than it costs you? The principle of "polluter pays" has a satisfying moral aspect and it also puts the incentives right—the parties with the ability to reduce pollution are given the motivation to find a way to do so.

For these reasons, and because in this short study the numbers are particularly only estimates, we present our cost benefit analysis with the caution that more precise and detailed assessments are desperately needed.

Cost estimates have been prepared by examining case studies. Reports were chosen where information was available for both the total cost of the system described and the land area served, or the initial stormwater retention volume, in order to calculate the cost of stormwater management per square mile of watershed. Several assumptions and caveats must be observed:

1. In the cost-per-square-mile calculations, no attempt was made to adjust costs on the basis of the amount of rainfall in the watershed. Sufficient data were generally not available for this purpose. In most cases, data came from areas where annual rainfalls are greater than in Los Angeles, and this may cause the cost estimates to be high.
2. In the cost-per-square mile calculation, the cost data were not available in a uniform format. It was not possible to calculate an accurate "present worth" including operations and maintenance costs for each case. In some cases operations and maintenance data were included, while in others they were not. In most cases operations and maintenance costs are low in comparison to installation costs, and they would be further reduced by discounting to present worth. Never the less, this may cause the cost estimates to be low.
3. Installation costs may vary depending on the slope of the land, the nature of the soils, depth to water table, local labor costs, and a wide variety of other factors that change with locality. No attempt was made to adjust the costs for these factors, and this may make the estimates high or low.
4. It is presumed that the systems described will be sufficient, in conjunction with source control efforts, to comply with water quality regulations. There was no case reported in which the quality control efforts were described as failing, or for which regulators asked for additional measures after the systems were complete. However, few data were shown for after-construction water quality, and most of the systems have not been in place for enough time to allow long-term assessment. The degree of success for source control efforts, while likely to be substantial, cannot be guaranteed.
5. Several of the projects described have been designed, but not implemented. It is assumed that they will perform as designed. In the case of the Federal Highway Administration formulas, these are regression results rather than individual case results.
6. It is likely that implementation in the Los Angeles area would involve projects that are larger than most of those listed. There likely will be economies of scale. This may cause the cost estimates to be high.

Summary of Case Study Project Costs

"I or D" refer to Implemented or Designed

Project	I or D	Description	Unit Size, square miles	Cost, $M	Cost, $M per square mile
Infiltration Systems					
Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District Regional Infiltration Basins (NRDC, 1999; Dave Pomaville, 2003)	I	130 turfed or unturfed infiltration basins serving residential areas. Treats or infiltrates 98% of runoff over area of 120 square miles	1		2.5 to 3.7
Study of Stormwater Regulations Cost (Herrerra Environmental Consultants, 2001)	D	Hypothetical calculation of costs for new residential development	0.016	.24	15
Study of Stormwater Regulations Cost (Herrerra Environmental Consultants, 2001)	D	Hypothetical calculation of costs for new commercial development	0.0016	0.28 to 0.57	175 to 356
Wetlands					
Tule Pond, Alameda (Wetzig, 1999)	I	Stormwater treatment pond for urban runoff	0.8	0.36	0.45
Treasure Island, San Francisco Bay (NRDC, 1999: Galvanis, 2003)	D	Wetland treatment system for local runoff	0.65	0.8 to 1.1	1.2 to 1.7
Long Lake Retrofit, Littleton, Mass. (Roy et al., 2003)	I	Swales, constructed wetlands, bioretention cells, outreach	1.5	0.63	0.42
San Diego Creek Natural Treatment System Master Plan (Strecker et al., 2003)	D	Network of open-water ponds and wetlands in Newport Bay drainage, 120 square mile area	2.7	<60	<0.5
Murray City, Utah (NRDC 1999: Hill,	I	Golf course and wetlands treat runoff from 4.5 miles of I-215	9.5	1.0	0.11

2003)		and the city			
Dover Mall, Delaware, (NRDC 1999)	I	Wetland installed on mall grounds drains 30 acres of 100% impervious cover	0.048	0.17	3.5
Sun Valley Project, Los Angeles County	D	Combination of various measures for flood and quality control in L.A. Basin	4.4	172 to 297	39 to 68
BMP Treatment Processes					
Oakland Park, Fla, industrial area (NRDC 1999)	I	Oil, grease, sediment, and trash removal by sedimentation and absorbance	0.008	0.261	33
Clear Lake Packed Bed Wetland Filter System (NRDC 1999: FHWA, 2003)	I	Oil, grease, nutrients, trace metal removal for water entering Clear lake	0.2	0.92	4.6
Compost Filter Facility, Hillsboro, Or. (FHWA, 2003)	I	Oil, grease, removal and filtration for highway runoff	0.12	0.12	0.11
Alexandria, Va, airport parking lot	I	Sand filters installed along the borders of a 1.95-acre parking lot	0.003	0.04	12.9
Bioretention Areas, FHWA cost estimate	D	Areas of highly permeable soil planted with trees and other vegetation			6.2
Underground Sand Filters	D	Porous medium filters placed in underground vaults, appropriate for highly urban areas			8.7
Dry Swales	D	Broad, shallow vegetated drainways covered with vegetation, usually grass			0.93
Surface Sand Filters	D	Porous medium filters installed at the surface			2.1
Filter Strips	D	Flat vegetated drainways covered with vegetation, usually grass			1.2
Port of Seattle container area cleanup	I	High quality street sweeping with sediment trap catch basins			3.1
Cost:Area Formulas from FHWA					
Infiltration trenches, FHWA cost estimate	D	Gravel-filled trenches. Infiltration eliminates runoff discharge.	$C_{mi2} = C_A/A$ $= (1/A)\times 1317\times V^{(0.63)}$ $= 1.2\times 10^6\times A^{(-0.37)}$		

Infiltration basins, FHWA cost estimate	D	Open basins, dry at most times, store and infiltrate runoff. Infiltration eliminates runoff discharge.	$C_{mi2} = C_A/A$ $= (1/A)\times(V/0.02832)^{(0.69)}$ $= 204{,}000\times A^{(-0.31)}$		
Detention and retention wetlands, FHWA cost estimate	D	Wetlands used for treating stormwater, with storage capacity available	$C_{mi2} = C_A/A$ $= (1/A)\times 168\times V^{(0.699)}$ $= 324{,}000\times A^{(-0.301)}$		
Detention vaults, FHWA cost estimate	D	Underground reservoirs for storage of runoff to reduce peak flows	$C_{mi2} =$ $(1/A)$ $\times 38.1\times(V/0.02832)^{(0.6816)}$ $= 690{,}000\times A^{(-0.3184)}$		
Results from ASCE-EPA BMP Database					
Dry Detention Basins					
I-605/SR-91 EDB	I		0.0013	0.077	60
I-5/Manchester (East)	I		0.0077	0.33	43
I-5 SR 6	I		0.0085	0.14	17
I-75/SR-78 EDB	I		0.022	0.82	38
Wetlands					
Swift Run Wetland	I		1.95	0.049	0.025
Sand Filters					
I-5/SR-78 P&R	I		0.0013	0.22	170
Escondido MS	I		0.0013	0.45	348
Eastern Eastern Regional MS	I		0.0024	0.34	141
Foothill MS (Sand Filter)	I		0.0029	0.48	164
Termination P&R	I		0.0045	0.46	102
LaCosta P&R	I		0.0045	0.23	49
Hydrodynamic Devices					
Jensen Precast (UVA)-Phase II	I		0.00045	0.039	86
I-210/Orcas Avenue	I		0.0018	0.04	22
Jensen Precast, (Sacramento)	I		0.0032	0.062	19
I-210/Filmore Street	I		0.0040	0.05	12
Charlottesville Stormceptor	I		0.0040	0.017	4.2
Sunset Park Baffle Box	I		0.040	0.023	0.57
Indian River Lagoon CDS Unit	I		0.098	0.055	0.56
Austin Rec Center	I		0.15	0.05	0.34

OSTC					
Grassy Swales					
I-650/SR-91 Swale	I		0.00032	0.11	341
Cerrito MS	I		0.00065	0.06	93
1-605/DelAmo	I		0.0011	0.13	115
I5/I-605 Swale	I		0.0011	0.073	64
Monticello High School	I		0.0013	0.015	11
SR-78 Melrose Dr	I		0.0039	0.13	34
I-5 North of Palomar Airport Road	I		0.0074	0.14	18
I-650/SR-91 Swale	I		0.00032	0.11	341

Economies of Scale

The costs listed in Table 2 reflect the cost for an individual facility ("Cost, $M" and "Cost, $M/mi^2") and associate it with the drainage area served, referred to as the "Unit Size". The costs per square mile for the individual units can be plotted to determine the effects of unit size (Figures 1 and 2). While there is a great deal of scatter in the data, it is clear that there is considerable economy of scale. Units serving drainages of a half square mile are typically 30% more expensive that those serving 1 square mile. Those serving drainages of one-tenth square mile are twice as expensive and small installations are extremely expensive in dollars per square mile. The most notable example of this is grassy swales: while each unit is relatively inexpensive, their small service areas make them very expensive per square mile served.

For some of the BMPs there are not sufficient data to judge the economies of scale, and as described, all of the data must be taken as approximate. Never the less, it seems that there is a good case to suggest that regional systems for handling runoff water will be most economical. This is clearly true of wetlands and infiltration basins, which are likely to be the most widely used approaches in the Los Angeles Region as a whole. This supports the position that the best solution will be a wetland or an infiltration basin also serving as a park, playing filed, or wildlife habitat as the stormwater management unit for a neighborhood of a square mile or greater.

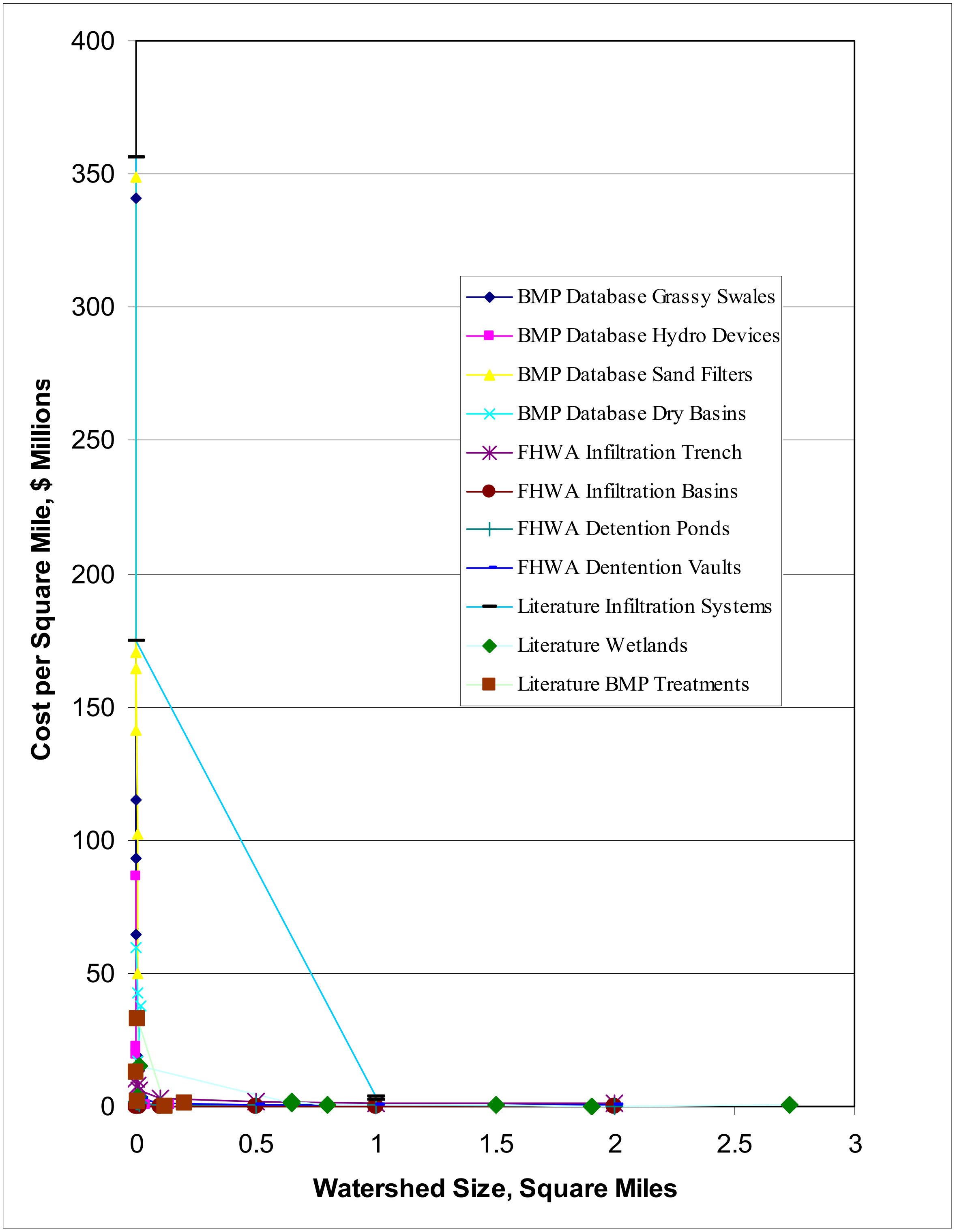

Figure 1. Plot of data for which costs per square mile and unit areas are known.

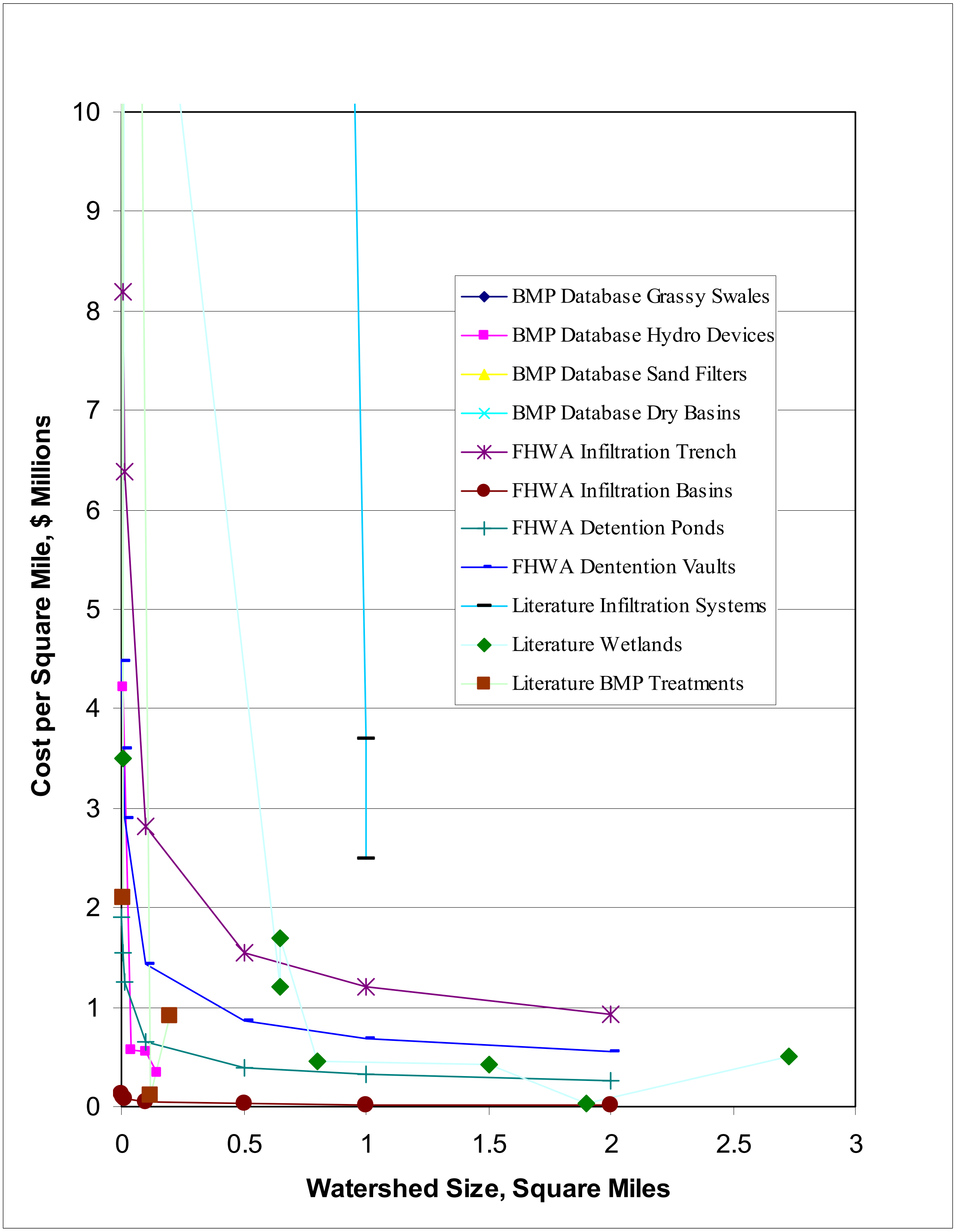

Figure 2. Cost per square mile versus unit size. Data are the same as those shown in Figure 1, but the axes have been magnified to show detail near the origin. Many data points fall outside of the plot.

Overall Costs of Stormwater Quality Control

It remains very difficult to produce an estimate of the total costs for complying with regulations in the Los Angeles Region. While there is substantial information on individual units that have been designed or implemented elsewhere, local factors are likely to make costs different in the Region. In most cases, it seems likely that costs in the Los Angeles Region will be higher than those reported elsewhere because land and labor costs are higher. Therefore, where a range of values is given, we have chosen the higher numbers.

This difficulty is compounded by the great variability in the data reported. To give just one example, the Federal Highway Administration formula estimates the cost of an infiltration basin needed to serve one square mile as $200,000. At the other extreme, the Herrerra Consultants report said that a detention/infiltration system for a residential area would cost $15 million per square mile. In preparing our total estimate, we have avoided using data that seem like outliers in comparison to the general run of the data.

The results compiled suggest two possible scenarios for stormwater quality control. The first approach is to rely on non-structural BMPs, such as programs to reduce littering, control pet waste, collect trash, prevent release of pollutants, and clean existing drains. This approach is less expensive because it involves no construction. However, there remains considerable doubt whether it will be sufficient to meet stormwater quality goals expressed as TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Loads). Control of pollutant release will be only partial—we cannot expect that everyone will comply with the rules—and the amount of runoff will be reduced only slightly.

The second scenario presumes implementation of non-structural BMPs (except storm drain cleaning) and construction of a network of wetlands and infiltration basins sufficient to capture the first three-quarters of an inch of rainfall, which typically carries the bulk of the pollutants. These relatively simple installations are not likely to be sufficient without complementary measures to reduce releases of coliforms, trace metals, fertilizers and toxic organics. Wetlands help to remove these, but will not be effective if inputs are too high. Infiltration avoids all pollutant discharge, because it prevents release of the water, but it is necessary to protect groundwater quality, so once again, inputs must be restricted. The wetlands and infiltration basins would be designed to have sufficient retention capacity to hold the first ¾ inch of rainfall—this "first flush" carries most of the pollutants, but pollutant discharges must be sufficiently reduced so that subsequent flows can be discharged directly to storm drains.

In combination with the non-structural BMPs, wetlands and infiltration basins (designed as "stormwater parks") are likely to bring stormwater quality into compliance. This system will be more expensive, but it also carries greater secondary benefits: the region will gain much-needed greenspace, property values will be improved, and most important, it will substantially increase the availability of groundwater.

It is our recommendation that the responsible municipalities and agencies in the region begin at once on assessing stormwater quality on a neighborhood basis and implementing the non-structural controls. As the success of these measures is measured, it will become apparent whether the structural BMPs are needed. It seems certain that they will be needed in some areas, but they may not be needed throughout the region. Thus our estimate of costs ranges from a minimum budget needed for the non-structural

BMPs to a maximum representing the cost of an area-wide system of wetlands and infiltration basins. The following section provides the details of how the cost estimates were prepared.

Non-structural BMPs

An estimate of costs for non-structural BMPs has been prepared by the American Public Works Association (APWA, 1992). They defined five levels of BMPs that might be workable, with the appropriate level depending on the stringency of discharge requirements and the success of the individual measures. Their analysis included ten source control measures with cost data, and has been used as the starting point for the analysis here. Our treatment of each measure is described in the following paragraphs.

No littering ordinance. Litter laws are in place in the region, but there is a need for far more vigorous public education and enforcement. The APWA study determined that each municipality would spend \$20,000 to put an enforcement program in place, and hire a half time person to manage the program (\$30,000 per year). There are about a hundred municipalities in the Los Angeles Region, so this implies a startup cost of \$200,000 and yearly costs of \$3 million. Some officers will be necessary, but it is assumed that their pay will be covered by revenue from fines. Total costs are estimated to be \$3 million plus the present worth of \$3 million per year at 3%, or \$103 million.

Pet waste ordinance. APWA predicted that the effort to control pet waste would be similar to that for litter, and estimated the same costs.

Chemical use and storage ordinance. APWA determined that a program to control the use and storage of chemicals would be similar is scope and cost to that for litter or pet waste. The same costs are estimated here. This would include the cost of programs to bring auto dismantlers and other local businesses into compliance.

Recycling programs. APWA predicted less trash would be discarded if convenient recycling programs were in place. Because these currently exist in most Los Angeles Region cities, and are justified by other concerns, no additional costs are estimated for this purpose.

Public education programs. Developing public support for stormwater quality control and explaining the need for citizen action will be vital to its success. The APWA determined a program costing \$275,000 in each municipality would be necessary. However, it would be confusing and unnecessarily duplicative to have each of the one hundred municipalities in the Los Angeles Region conduct its own program. We instead assume a single program will be funded at the level of \$5 million per year, which is approximately the current rate of expenditure. It also seems likely that education will not be needed indefinitely—to the degree that the message is successful, it will certainly become ingrained after perhaps ten years of advertising. We therefore estimate a total of \$50 million for public education.

Vacant lot cleanup programs. This function will be part of the improved trash collection program, so funds are not separately allocated.

Spill prevention ordinance. APWA determined a separate program would be necessary to reduce the frequency of chemical spills and facilitate their rapid cleanup. This function has largely been overtaken by hazardous waste management regulations, and so is estimated to require no additional costs here.

Program to prevent illicit discharges. APWA determined that vigorous efforts would be needed to find and eliminate illicit discharges to the storm drain system. We agree that this will be necessary to avoid loads of non-biodegradable pollutants, such as trace metals, on treatment wetlands and infiltration basins, and to prevent excessive loading of organic contaminants and coliforms. APWA predicted a cost of $4 per acre of watershed to start, and $50 per acre per year thereafter in order to deploy and monitor sampling devices and to trace down points of discharge. For the 2,050 square miles in which stormwater protection is needed, this amounts to $6.5 million in capital expenses and $80 million per year in ongoing costs. We expect however, that many illicit connections will be found at first, and that after these are eliminated, only a small program will be needed to detect new illicit connections. We therefore estimate that the ongoing costs will continue for only five years, totaling $407 million.

Improved cleaning of storm drains. During dry periods, storm drains collect trash from illicit dumping and wind blown litter (we expect no trash will enter through the catch basins because screens will be installed). Sediments also accumulate in the channels. Releases to the rivers and ocean could be reduced by a summer program of storm drain cleaning. The APWA estimates such a program can be put in place for $21 per acre per year, or about $27 million per year over the area of concern. The present worth of $27 million per year is $900 million (assuming an interest rate of 3%). No storm drain cleaning is expected for the wetlands and infiltration scenarios, on the presumption that trash and sediments will be removed from the water before it enters the drains.

Trash control. Trash must be removed from the runoff. A settlement agreement on Trash TMDL between the LA Regional Water Board and the City of Los Angeles includes spending of $168 million to reduce trash releases by 50% in five years. Cleaning up the region required removing all of the trash from an urban area more than twice the size of the city. Thus the estimate of $600 million seems reasonable.

Low flow treatment. One of the best steps, in terms of water quality benefits per dollar, is to use excess capacity in the wastewater treatment plants for treatment of low flows. This will keep the rivers and oceans clean for most of the year at little additional cost. The City of Los Angeles estimates the cost of building the necessary diversion structures at $14 million (Kharaghani, 2003). The urban region is about twice the size of the city, so we have estimated a total cost of $28 million. This does not include operation costs. While there will be modest cost increases associated with the greater flows, the biggest costs are associated with the installed treatment capacity, which is already in place.

Improved street sweeping. The APWA report determined that sweeping should be improved by increasing its frequency. Research results developed since the APWA report suggest that more frequent sweeping with traditional brush machines produces only a modest improvement. However, changing to vacuum sweepers is effective, and can remove up to 50% of particulate pollutants.

The upgrade of street sweeping in the region will require purchasing new vacuum-type sweepers to replace those currently in use. There are about 400 street sweeping machines in use, which must be replaced once every four years, so 100 machines will be purchased each year. Vacuum machines cost about $150,000 rather than the $75,000 for standard machines. Thus the additional costs of higher quality sweeping are $75,000 per machine or about $7.5 million per year. Assuming an interest rate of 3%, this has a present worth of about $250 million.

Costs for on-site BMPs for private firms. It is anticipated that application of non-structural BMPS will include requirements that businesses make efforts to reduce pollution and runoff from their facilities. Efforts are likely to be highly variable: an accounting firm whose work is all done in offices might need to do no more that redirect its roof runoff to landscaping areas. A manufacturing facility might install sand filters and oil-water separators. Parking lots may be remodeled. It is difficult to provide an estimate for these efforts, but a general approximation for the total can be approached if firms are considered by size (Table 3). Data on the number of firms within chosen size ranges, measured by the number of employees, have been compiled for Los Angeles County by the California Employment Development Department (2001). Again, this area is not the same as the Los Angeles Region governed by LA Regional Water Board, but there is substantial overlap and the demographics are similar.

Table 3. Estimate of On-site BMP Costs for Los Angeles County Firms by Size Class

Number of Employees	Number of Firms	Average Cost per Firm	Total Costs
0-4	219,974	10	$2,199,740
5-9	37,125	500	18,562,500
10-19	25,366	1,000	25,366,000
20-49	19,682	2,000	39,364,000
50-99	7,745	5,000	38,725,000
100-249	4,239	10,000	42,390,000
250-499	1,138	25,000	28,450,000
500-999	408	50,000	20,400,000
1000+	260	100,000	26,000,000
Totals	315,937		241,457,240
		Average cost per firm	$764

Most small firms will not spend any money, so the average cost per firm is expected to be very low. A few might be required to improve trash disposal methods or reroute their rooftop drainage. At the other extreme, the largest companies might improve trash disposal and materials handling methods, build infiltration system planters, install oil-water separators, institute parking lot and work area sweeping. Companies that install new parking lots or reconstruct old ones may incur significant costs.

Costs for compliance with the “3/4-inch rule”. The SUSMP regulations promulgated by the LA Regional Water Board require that new developments larger than one acre and redevelopment must provide for infiltration or minimal treatment of runoff from the first ¾-inch of rainfall from a storm event. It is difficult to determine how much this will cost. Proponents have suggested the costs will be minimal, while opponents have predicted high costs. Experts contacted during this study were of the general opinion that landscaping designed to infiltrate the runoff from a ¾-inch storm would be different, but not significantly more expensive, than traditional landscaping. On the other hand, engineers in the discipline believe that most builders are choosing treatment systems rather than infiltration. The stormwater control costs will likely be a small fraction of building costs. Ultimately, we have concluded that there are not sufficient data to make a numerical cost estimate. The costs are therefore described here only as "modest", and further study is recommended.

Wetlands and Infiltration Basins: Estimate Based on Cost per Square Mile of Watershed

The land within the Los Angeles Region varies from lightly settled areas, like the upper reaches of the Santa Clara River Watershed or the Santa Monica Mountains, through neighborhoods of single family homes with yards, to the extremely dense development of downtown Los Angeles or the Wilshire District. There are about 1,375 square miles of incorporated cities in Los Angeles County. The region of the LA Regional Water Board includes parts of Ventura County, and parts of both counties that are not incorporated are never the less populated. To evaluate the possible alternatives for runoff control, we have conceptually divided the 3,100-square-mile region that is under the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board into four parts 1000 square miles is estimated to be of "low density", requiring some runoff BMP treatment, but having sufficient land for development of treatment wetlands or infiltration systems. 1,000 square miles is estimated to be "high density" requiring infiltration systems but excluding wetlands. 50 square miles is estimated to be extremely dense downtown development, requiring some more sophisticated BMP treatment systems. The remainder of the region is considered rural, and we presume the only cost is for source control outreach and enforcement. These definitions and numbers are approximate, but there is also flexibility in the applicability of the various technologies.

For the low density urban areas, we assume some combination of infiltration systems and treatment wetlands will be constructed. The range of reported costs for treatment wetlands runs from $110,000 per square mile for Murray City, Utah, to $1.7 million per square mile for the Treasure Island wetland in San Francisco. The San Diego Creek wetland system seems an excellent example—it is designed for a populated region of Orange County that is quite similar to many areas in Los Angeles County. However, it is specifically designed to treat low flows only, and the total cost of the system has not been provided (except that it is less than $500,000 per square mile). The Long Lake retrofit also seems like an appropriate example. It uses a mix of wetland, infiltration and biological BMPs in an urban residential area, and has a well-established cost of $420,000 per square mile. We have therefore used this value in our total estimate of $420 million for the low density areas.

In areas of high density housing, where yards are small, or in industrial areas with large roof and parking areas, runoff coefficients are higher and there is less land available. Here it seems likely that infiltration systems will be necessary. The best example for comparison is the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District, which installed 130 basins over an area of 120 square miles, with many of the facilities dedicated to multiple uses as parks and playing fields. Cost estimates for the system range from $2.5 million to $3.7 million per square mile. While a similar system built in the Los Angeles Region could take advantage of existing parks, power line rights-of-way, parking lots, and other available land, it seems appropriate to use the higher number because land here will be more expensive. Thus we estimate cost in these areas to be \$3.7 million per square mile for a total of \$3.7 billion.

In extremely dense areas, neither wetlands nor infiltration systems will be possible. Pollutant loads, despite source control efforts, will be considerable in the near future. Underground sand filters, sediment traps, oil and grease adsorbants and other more elaborate treatment BMPs will be needed. The lowest-cost processes are filter strips, dry swales and bioretention areas, but these require space that is unlikely to be available (the Hillsboro, Oregon compost filter, at \$110,000 per square mile is considered an outlier). Even the Alexandria, Virginia airport parking lot solution is unlikely to be workable because so much of the parking area is in multi-level structures in downtown areas. This combination of more pollutants and less space suggests that the Oakland Park, Florida system for treating industrial runoff is the best case example. Its cost was equivalent to \$33 million per square mile, for a total of \$1.65 billion over the extremely dense urban area.

Together, this approach estimates that the total BMP facilities cost will be about \$5.7 billion.

Wetlands and Infiltration Basins: Estimate Based on Needed Retention Capacity

Investigators working on the Sun Valley Project (Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, 2003, Figure 4-3 of page 4-8) have designed several BMPs and provided carefully calculated cost estimates. These are recent figures, reduced to present worth, and reflecting the local conditions in the urban Los Angeles Region. They provide costs in terms of dollars per acre-foot of stormwater storage capacity for several BMPs. Three examples have been chosen for consideration here: Stonehurst Park and Wentworth Park (which simply lower the park level to two feet below the surrounding area so that they serve as infiltration basins, or “stormwater parks”), and storage in below-street infiltration vaults. A system that stores the runoff from a ¾-inch storm will comply with SUSMP requirements. In the low density areas, it is estimated that the runoff coefficient is 0.4. In the high density areas, it is estimated to be 0.6, and in the extremely dense areas it is estimated to be 1.0.

We estimate that the low-density areas can be served at the Stonehurst Park price, the high density areas can be served at the Wentworth Park price, and the extremely dense areas can be served by street infiltration vaults. This approach to estimating the total cost is completely independent of the first approach, but the final estimate of \$4.0 billion for BMP facilities is reasonably similar.

Wetlands and Infiltration Basins: Estimation of Total Costs from the APWA Study

The APWA study produced total estimates for costs for the nation for five scenarios for stormwater quality control. One estimate was for a system of detention basins and wetlands, as is being proposed for the structural BMPs described here. They estimated that a national system would cost \$91 billion. For 260 million people in the United States, this is about \$350 per capita. For the 10 million people in the Los Angeles Region, this produces an estimate of \$3.5 billion. The APWA anticipated maintenance costs for detention and retention basins at about 1% of the construction cost per year. Discounted to present worth, this increases the total cost by 33%, or \$1.2 billion. APWA numbers thus indicate a total cost of $4.7 billion. This estimate is similar to those shown for the entries in Table 3 for facilities costs for alternatives B and C.

Wetlands and Infiltration Basins: An "Upper Bound" Provided by the Sun Valley Study

The Sun Valley study developed a detailed design for a 4.4 square mile watershed that currently has no storm drains. It was designed to contain the water from a 50-year, 3-day storm—14.8 inches of rain—using stormwater parks and below-street infiltration vaults. Because this approach will infiltrate essentially all of the rain that runs off from the area, and because the design criterion of 14.8 inches greatly exceeds the ¾ inch assumed here, it unquestionably constitutes a plan that would overcomply with the strictest imaginable stormwater quality control regulations. Further, because it is a complete and detailed design, it is essentially certain that it can be built for the cost estimated. Figures are recent, and reflect the costs of construction in the Southern California area.

The costs determined can therefore serve as an "upper bound" multiple benefit expenditure that a municipality could imaginable be required to incur—while there is every reason to suppose that the easier goal of stormwater quality control can be done for a much lower cost. The low cost alternative described was $171 million for 4.4 square miles, or $39 million per square mile. For the 1050 square miles of the high density and extremely dense urban Los Angeles Region, this would result in a cost of $41 billion. Wetlands for the low-density areas and trash control for the entire region would add about $1 billion more. Thus we can say with great certainty that no alternative more expensive than $42 billion will be needed.

Overall Benefits of Stormwater Quality Control

The Esthetic Value of a Clean Ocean

Much of the value of living near clean streams and a pollution-free ocean is difficult to quantify. People enjoy the view, they like watching wildlife, and they prefer vegetation and sand and water to pavement. Some efforts to place a dollar value on these benefits have been made by the EPA (1999) and others (Kramer, 2003; Soderqvist, 2000; Whitehead, et al., 2000).

Soderqvist asked residents in the area of the Stockholm archipelago how much they were willing to pay in order to reduce eutrophication of the nearby ocean. The effects of oceanic eutrophication are relatively subtle—less obvious than floating trash or debris washed up on the beach. He determined the willingness to pay to be between $54 and $90 per person.

Whitehead investigated resident willingness to pay for reduction of eutrophication of the Neuse River Basin in North Carolina. He found 44,000 landowners were willing to pay about $76 each for the water quality improvement.

Kramer surveyed people in the area of the Catawba River in North and South Carolina, asking about willingness to pay for improved water. The average result was $139 per taxpayer.

The EPA surveyed people across the U.S., asking about their willingness to pay for the various services associated with improvements in fresh water quality. They found people willing to pay $210 per household for improvement of water quality sufficient to support boating, $158 for the further improvement sufficient to support fishing, $177 for further improvement sufficient to allow swimming, and $158 for improvement sufficient to support natural aquatic life. Of the total of $703, however, only 67% was ascribed to local water quality improvement, while the rest was associated with improvement nationwide. Assuming 2.5 persons per household, this results in an estimate of $188 per person for willingness to pay for local freshwater improvements, similar to the estimate by Kramer for the Catawba River.

We have chosen the EPA estimate for freshwater improvements: the higher estimate seems reasonable because freshwater resources in the LA basin are generally in very poor condition, and because we have ignored the national effect (their results indicated that people throughout the nation were willing to pay for improvements throughout the nation—we are not counting the willingness of people outside the LA Region to pay for improvements here, and that number is not zero). Adding this to a mid-range value of the Soderqvist estimate for improvements in ocean water quality produces a result of $260 per person. This seems a quite reasonable value. 9.5 million people live in the Los Angeles Region, so this value indicates a total willingness to pay, based solely on the value of living in a region of clean waters, of about $2.5 billion.

Larsen and Kew (2003) have surveyed residents of California to determine their total willingness to pay for removing all impairments from bodies of water in the state. They determined that the average willingness to pay was $15.46 per month. Assuming 2.5 persons per household, this is $6.18 per person per month. For 9.5 million residents in the Los Angeles Region, this is $58.7 million per month, with a present worth of $23 billion. This represents the value of removing all impairments—including those caused by wastewater pollution, shoreside development, pollution from boats, and others. Our estimate for stormwater pollution alone is about one-tenth of this. Thus the Larsen and Kew results suggest our estimate is reasonable and conservative.

General support for these numbers was found in a survey done for the Packard Foundation performed by Mark Baldassare (Weisse, 2003). He determined that seven of ten Californians are concerned about the decline in coastal resources. Sixty-nine percent said the condition of the coastline is very important to their quality of life, and 75% visit the coast at least several times each year. Seventy-two percent favor reducing stormwater pollution, even if the cost leads to higher utility bills.

Ecosystem Services

A primary purpose of stormwater quality control is protection of nearshore marine ecosystems. These ecosystems provide humanity with a wide variety of services, ranging from educational opportunity to fish resources to chemical maintenance of the atmosphere. While the effort to value such ecosystem services is necessarily difficult and approximate, some studies have been made. Costanza, et al. (1997) in an article published in the respected journal *Nature*, assessed the value of coastal ecosystems at $12 trillion per year worldwide. The World Resources Institute estimates that there are 1.6 million kilometers of coastline (measured at a resolution of 1 kilometer). If we assume that stormwater discharges from the Los Angeles Region affect about 100 miles, or 160 kilometers of coastline, this is 0.01% of the world's total, suggesting that the value of local coastal resources is $1.2 billion per year. Assuming an interest rate of 3%, this income stream has a present worth of $40 billion. Finally, we can make the general approximation that stormwater pollution reduces the services provided by the local coastal ecosystem by 5%. This suggests that the value of lost services is $2 billion.

This number is quite approximate. It must secondly be interpreted thoughtfully because it includes services such as nutrient cycling and maintenance of the atmosphere, which are of undoubted value to the world, but which do not show up in the daily budgets of local citizens or local municipalities. The services are nevertheless quite real and quite valuable, and should be included in the accounting.

Additional Water Supply

Infiltration of stormwater will add to area groundwater reserves. These are a valuable resource that currently provides a substantial fraction of the Los Angeles Region water supply. Water that is infiltrated from the stormwater quality control system will add to local resources, reducing the need for imported water. We assumed that water will be collected from 2050 square miles. Rainfall ranges from 12 to 16 inches per year in the region, and infiltration is from 2 to 8 inches per year. It is conservative to assume that installation of a distributed system of infiltration basins will increase infiltration in this area by an average of 3 inches per year, corresponding to collection of four storms of ¾ inches (or a larger number of smaller storms). Thus total infiltration will be 300,000 acre-feet per year. Some of this may be unrecoverable, having entered contaminated or otherwise unusable aquifers. However, even this will contribute to reducing the problems of seawater intrusion. We estimate that about 90% or 270,000 acre-feet of the infiltrated water will be available.

Current importation costs are about $450 per acre-foot. However, current supply shortages are forcing serious consideration of desalination as an alternative source because political and environmental factors preclude significant increases in importation. We predict that continued growth in the Los Angeles Region will require that water be obtained from such high-cost sources, so we have used $800 per acre-foot as the value of the infiltrated ground water. Further, even if water is available for $450 per-acre foot, this is only the marginal financial cost of import—the true life cycle cost, including environmental impacts in source areas, is surely much higher. 270,000 acre-feet of water per year at $800 per acre-foot amounts to $216 million per year. The present worth of this income stream is $7.2 billion.

The appropriate number is highly dependent on assumptions: if conservation measures are effective and growth is slow, desalination might not be necessary. However if we include the costs of political friction with source areas, and the environmental impact of water transfers on those areas—that is, the full life-cycle cost of imported water, even the cost estimate of $800 per acre-foot may be low.

Flood Control

The flood control system in Los Angeles County is currently designed to cope with runoff from areas with a runoff coefficient on the order of 0.5. Stormwater quality control measures could substantially reduce this number—currently the coefficient for the San Gabriel Valley, measured below the spreading grounds at Whittier Narrows, is 0.05. Calculations suggest that the recent Army Corps of Engineers project that raised the embankments along the lower Los Angeles River have eliminated the 100-year flood plain for now, and property owners have correspondingly been relieved of flood insurance costs of $20 million or $30 million per year. However, if development continues to increase the runoff coefficient of the region, progressively more expensive projects will be required—it is likely that further protection would require rebuilding many bridges. Alternatively, flood insurance will once again be necessary, and uninsured properties will be at risk. It is perhaps reasonable to presume that infiltration systems will avoid the cost of the next embankment project, which could easily costs twice as much as the one just completed, or $400 million.

A second estimate can be developed this way: The National Flood Insurance Program says there are 25,620 policies held in Los Angeles County with an average premium of $550, for a total yearly cost of $14 million. The present worth at 3% is $466 million. Presumably, most but not all of this could be avoided with a complete stowmwater quality control system. Thus the estimate of $400 million seems reasonable.

Property Value Improvements from Greenspace and Water

Certainly additional parks and other greenspace would add to property values. Developers frequently add central lakes or greenspace to large developments, demonstrating their belief that the value of the land for additional housing is less than its value as an amenity. In a study compiled in 1995, the U.S. EPA said (U.S. EPA, 1995):

> "People have a strong emotional attachment to water, arising from its aesthetic qualities--tranquility, coolness, and beauty. As a result, most waterbodies within developments can be used as marketing tools to set the tone for entire projects (Tourbier and Westmacott, 1992). A recent study conducted by the National Association of Home Builders indicates that "whether a beach, pond, or stream, the proximity to water raises the value of a home by up to 28 percent." A 1991 American Housing Survey conducted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Commerce also concurs that "when all else is equal, the price of a home located within 300 feet from a body of water increases by up to 27.8 percent" (NAHB, 1993). Dick Dillingham, President of the National Association of Realtors' Residential Sales Council, declares, "Water makes a difference . . . there is such a very small supply of properties that can claim a water location and it is something you cannot add" (Lehman, 1994)."

Homes overlooking the new wetlands and greenspace will see the greatest increase in property values. Those farther away will appreciate less. A study reported by Fairfax County, Virginia, (Environmental Coordinating Committee, 2003) interpreted the EPA results and concluded that an aesthetically valuable pond raises the value of nearby houses by $10,000 each. In Los Angeles County, the median home is valued at about $400,000, so a $10,000 increase is about 2.5%, which seems a reasonable number. Demographic data for Los Angeles County (This is not the same as the Los Angeles Region governed by the Water Quality Control Board, but there is considerable overlap, and the demographics are quite similar) indicate there are 3.27 million homes, of which 47.9%, or 1.55 million, are owner-occupied. We expect that about one-third of these, or 500,000 homes, would benefit from additional greenspace in a complete stormwater control system (the others could be too remote, or might already have sufficient greenspace). Increasing the value of each home by $10,000 provides a total benefit of $5 billion.

Improved Property Values from Trash Control

Enforcement of litter laws and improved street cleaning would improve the appearance of our neighborhoods. It is believed that the esthetic improvement would have a value to individuals at least equal to the esthetic benefits of a cleaner ocean, so we have valued this at $100 per person, for a total of $950 million.

Cost Savings from Reduced Dredging

Costs for sediment dredging and disposal in area harbors range from about $10 per ton, when the sediment is clean and a nearby disposal site is available, to $30 per ton when the sediment is contaminated or the disposal site is distant. Disposal of sediments classified as toxic may cost $100 per ton. Personnel at Los Angeles Harbor estimate that about 40% of currently dredged sediment is contaminated, and occasional loads are toxic. In general, acceptable disposal sites are becoming harder to find, so distant sites are likely to be the rule. Thus, an estimate for future sediment removal of $30 per ton is reasonable. The Environmental Protection Agency has estimated overall costs and effectiveness for sediment control at construction sites, and the results indicate that preventing the runoff of a ton of sediment costs from $69 to $86 (Appendix II). Therefore, the savings associated with alleviation of harbor sedimentation alone offset about a third of the costs of construction site measures. Savings for Los Angeles Harbor will be about $3 million per year. Regional savings will be about $10 million, with a present worth of $330 million.

To cite another example, it is estimated that the San Joaquin Marsh wetland preserve collects 50,000 tons of sediment per year. Assuming a removal cost of $30 per ton, the benefit for Newport Bay, which is just downstream, is $1.5 million per year.

Cost Savings from Improved Public Health

Sufficient data do not exist for estimating the value of benefits from reduced exposure to air pollutants. Certainly fine particles are an important part of the causes of health impairment, and experts agree that resuspension of road dust is an important contributor to fine particle exposure at street level where we live. They also contribute substantially to settlement of dust and dirt on buildings, requiring cleaning expenses. However, estimates of the magnitude of this effect are not currently possible.

Summary of predicted costs and benefits

Table 3 presents a summary of the estimated costs and benefits. Three estimates are included. In the first (A), non-structural BMPs are presumed to be the only measures employed. In the second (B), wetlands and infiltration basins are assumed, and the costs are estimated on a cost-per-square-mile basis. The third set of columns (C) again describes the wetlands and infiltration basins scenario, but makes cost estimates on a per-acre-foot-detention basis. The second and third estimates also presume implementation of the non-structural BMPs, except for storm drain cleaning.

Benefits differ because implementation on non-structural BMPs does not produce property increases associated with greenspace, does not significantly increase groundwater supply, and does not reduce harbor sedimentation.

The costs of stormwater quality control are significant. Non-structural BMPs alone will cost $2.6 billion. Structural systems, including wetlands and infiltration basins, will cost between $5.7 billion and $7.4 billion. However, it should be noted that these costs will be borne over a period of many years—probably ten years at least. More importantly, the benefits of these expenditures considerably exceed their costs. For the non-structural BMPs alone, the benefit-to-cost ratio is 1.9. For the structural approach the estimates are 2.5 and 3.3. Control of pollution and reestablishment of the hydrologic cycle will produce a greener city with higher property values, better esthetics, cleaner rivers and a cleaner ocean, and a larger and more stable water supply.

Table 2. Overall Cost Estimate for Stormwater Quality Control in the Los Angeles Region

Sums are rounded to two significant figures

		A. Non-Structural BMPs, modified from APWA			B. Wetlands and Infiltration Basins, watershed area basis		C. Wetlands and Infiltration Basins, detention volume basis		
Regions and BMPs	**Area, sq. miles**	**Capi-tal Cost $M**	**O&M Costs $M**	**Total $M**	**Cost / square mile, $M**	**Cost or Bene-fit $M**	**Acre-feet initial flow**	**Cost per acre-foot**	**Cost or Bene-fit, $M**
Costs for Non-Structural BMPs									
No Littering Ordinance		2.5	3	103		103			103
Pet Waste Ordinance		2.5	3	103		103			103
Chemical Use and Storage		2.5	3	103		103			103
Public Education			5	50		50			50
Illicit Discharge Program		6.5	80	407		407			407
Increased Cleaning of Drains			27	900					
Trash Control				608		608			608
Low Flow Sanitary Treatment				28		28			28
Improved Street Cleaning	2050			250		250			250
Private On-site BMPs		241		241		241			241
New construction rules				Mod-est		Mod-est			Mod-est
Total N-S BMPs				2791		1891			1891
Costs for Structural BMPs									
Rural	1050					0			0
Low Density, Industrial (C=0.4)	1000				0.42	420	15,500	0.053	822
High Density (C=0.6)	1000				3.70	3,700	23,250	0.098	2,279
Extremely Dense (C=1.0)	50				33.00	1,650	1,938	0.470	911
Total Facilities Costs						5,770			4,011
Total Cost, LA Region				**2550**		**7420**			**5661**
Benefits									
Flood Control						400			400
Greenspace, Water Property Values						5,000			5,000
Clean Ocean Esthetics				2500		2,500			2,500
Clean Streets Esthetics				950		950			950
Groundwater Replenishment						7,200			7,200
Improved Beach Tourism				100		100			100
Preservation of Ocean Ecosystems				2000		2,000			2,000
Reduced Harbor Sedimentation						330			330
Improved Health, Cleaner Buildings, Reduced Exposure to Particulates						Sig-nifican t			Sig-nifican t
Total Benefits, LA Region				**5600**		**18,000**			**18,000**

Recommendations for Action

The results developed here indicate that a distributed approach to stormwater quality control, employing non-structural BMPS with a system of wetlands and infiltration basins will achieve stormwater quality compliance and will be far cheaper than advanced treatment plants. It is recommended that the responsible organizations begin immediately with the non-structural measures, analyze their effectiveness, and add wetlands and infiltration systems as necessary to achieve the goal of protecting the rivers and coastal zones of the Los Angeles Region. Our results indicate that the benefit-to-cost ratio for the non-structural BMPs is about two, and for the larger effort is about 3. Thus both the beginning effort and the full response represent good investments for the people of the region.

Outreach

Municipalities that are finding themselves responsible for stormwater cleanup should act immediately to lay the groundwork for comprehensive programs. Outreach programs should be developed to inform the public of the problems and of what they can do to help with the solution. Vigorous efforts to reduce littering, for example, will reduce costs in subsequent steps as programs develop. Current regulations controlling release of sediments from construction sites should be enforced and supplemented with contractor education efforts.

Data Collection and Planning

Municipalities should immediately begin the process of determining the extent and nature of their individual stormwater quality problems. Many may find, for example, that stormwater from neighborhoods of single-family homes can be discharged to rivers or infiltrated with little or no treatment. Early identification and elimination of problem sources might greatly reduce later expenditures on treatment systems—the programs of thorough data collection and vigorous enforcement described earlier were notably effective at reducing pollutant concentrations in discharges and cost very little. It will certainly be a tragedy if we build expensive treatment systems to solve a problem that can be eliminated with a citation.

Municipalities should also immediately assess their property holdings. Cities frequently own substantial amounts of land, and some of this will be appropriate for stormwater control facilities. Purchasing programs should be developed immediately, so that cities can take advantage of opportunities for economical land acquisition as they arise.

Administrative Structure

Adding to the daunting technical and financial problems, the distributed approach for stormwater control requires that problems be solved by a holistic effort for each sub-watershed. The boundaries of sub-watersheds do not correspond to political boundaries, and cities will be forced to cooperate in ways that have never been required before. Further, controlling local pollution releases and restoring the hydrologic cycle involve issues that have traditionally be dealt with by an astonishing variety of agencies. If we imagine controlling the runoff quality of a sub-watershed by installing a park/infiltration system with associated wetlands, for example, efforts should include the sanitation districts for the cities overlapping the sub-watershed (because of stormwater quality control), the Water Replenishment District (because of groundwater infiltration), the County Flood Control District (because the park will contribute to flood control and reduce the cost of downstream facilities), parks departments (because a recreational area will result), and wildlife agencies (governing the habitat created). It is reasonable to expect, moreover, that each of these agencies will contribute to the funding necessary for construction and maintenance. It is likely that, with appropriate apportionment, such a facility will have a favorable cost/benefit ratio for each of the agencies involved. It is certain that gaining the cooperation and contributions of all of these agencies will be extremely difficult. It may be appropriate that legislation be passed at the state level to provide a means for bringing these agencies together.

Funding

While runoff quality can be controlled by methods significantly cheaper than the massive construction of advanced treatment plants, the cost remains significant, and comes at a time when state and local governments are desperately short of funds. It is reasonable to suggest that funding should come from those who contribute to the problem, so that the taxation system mimics a market—assigning costs to the activity that generates them. Hundreds of municipal stormwater utilities, for example, have instituted a tax that is proportional to the number of square feet of impermeable surface on the land. An extension to this approach is to give property-owners fee rebates for installing BMPs that lower runoff quantity or increase water quality. This approach, or others that encourage owners to reduce their runoff, could fund the solution even as they reduce the magnitude of the problem. Certainly fines for littering should be used to fund litter law enforcement in the way that parking fines fund parking enforcement. Efforts to control illegal discharges could be at least partially supported by fines of those making the discharges. All of these approaches would be consistent with the principle that the polluter should pay, and would provide incentives that would contribute to stormwater cleanup.

A “cap and trade” system would be one means of approaching the funding dilemma. If all landowners were given the choice of either purchasing tradable discharge allowances or cleaning up runoff, a free-market trading system would allow owners to trade these allowances and in the process assign stormwater runoff reduction to owners who are able to cheaply install BMPs. This system, or a combined stormwater utility fee with BMP credits, would tend to produce the lowest cost solution overall. A study under way in Cincinnati, Ohio, suggests that such systems could be successful (Thurston et al., 2003).

Changes in Building Codes

This study indicates that parking lots constitute a significant resource for promoting stormwater infiltration. Building codes should be amended immediately to require that all new or reconstructed parking lots be designed to infiltrate the water that they collect. While there will be costs associated with the infiltration systems, the work described above indicates that much—and often all—of these costs can be offset by reduced costs for curbs and drainage systems.

Very large facilities, such as those for malls, should be considered sites for installation of subsurface infiltration vaults that could receive water from surrounding areas as well. These could be installed in sections, to minimize disruption to the commercial establishments. A mechanism could be established by which the site owners are compensated for the costs of handling the runoff.

Other building codes should be changed to encourage on-site infiltration of water rather than rapid drainage to the street. It may also be appropriate to consider limitations on the use of architectural copper sheeting, which can release copper ions to stormwater, and on the use of galvanized materials, which can release zinc.

Purchase of High-Efficiency Street Sweeping Equipment

Improved street sweeping seems very likely to be an important part of future stormwater programs. It can remove 30 to 50 percent of the particulate-associated pollutants, substantially reducing the load on downstream systems. It will have the secondary benefits of improving neighborhood appearance and reducing the exposure to air pollutants at street level. Municipalities should make the decision now to purchase only high-efficiency vacuum sweepers as they make routine replacements of their street cleaning machinery.

Investigation of Coliform Sources

Additional studies, particularly employing newly available methods for rapid identification of microorganisms, should be done to determine the sources of pathogenic organisms in stormwater.

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared with the financial support of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Board and the State Water Resources Control Board, and assistance from Susan Cloke, Dennis Dickerson, and Xavier Swamikannu. Bowman Cutter and Bob Vos provided critical reviews. Arash Bina performed library searches and summarized some source documents.

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APPENDIX I.
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR CONSTRUCTION SITES

(Adapted from the Washington State Department of Ecology Water Quality Program, 2001).

The **12 Elements** of Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP):

Mark Clearing Limits

Prior to beginning land disturbing activities all clearing limits, sensitive areas and their buffers, and trees that are to be preserved shall be clearly marked, both in the field and on the plans, to prevent damage and offsite impacts.

Preserving Natural Vegetation

The purpose of preserving natural vegetation is to reduce erosion wherever practicable. Limiting site disturbance is the single most effective method for reducing erosion.

Buffer Zones

An undisturbed area or strip of natural vegetation or an established suitable planting will provide a living filter to reduce soil erosion and runoff velocities.

High Visibility Plastic or Metal Fence, Stake and Wire Fence

Fencing is intended to: (1) restrict clearing to approved limits; (2) prevent disturbance of sensitive areas, their buffers; (3) limit construction traffic to designated construction entrances or roads; and, (4) protect areas where marking with survey tape may not provide adequate protection.

Establish Construction Access

To minimize the tracking of sediment onto public roads and into surface waters:

Stabilized Construction Entrance

Construction entrances are stabilized to reduce the amount of sediment transported onto paved roads by vehicles or equipment by constructing a stabilized pad of quarry spalls at entrances to construction sites.

Wheel Wash

Wheel washes reduce the amount of sediment transported onto paved roads by motor vehicles.

Construction Road/Parking Area Stabilization

Stabilizing subdivision roads, parking areas, and other onsite vehicle transportation routes immediately after grading reduces erosion caused by construction traffic or runoff.

Control Flow Rates

Properties and waterways downstream from development sites shall be protected from erosion due to increases in the volume, velocity, and peak flow rate of stormwater runoff from the project site.

Sediment Trap

A sediment trap is a small temporary ponding area with a gravel outlet used to collect and store sediment from sites cleared and/or graded during construction.

Temporary Sediment Pond

Sediment ponds remove sediment from runoff originating from disturbed areas of the site. Sediment ponds are typically designed to remove sediment no smaller than medium silt (0.02 mm).

Install Sediment Controls

Straw Bale Barrier

To decrease the velocity of sheet flows and intercept and detain small amounts of sediment from disturbed areas of limited extent, preventing sediment from leaving the site.

Brush Barrier

The purpose of brush barriers is to reduce the transport of coarse sediment from a construction site by providing a temporary physical barrier to sediment and reducing the runoff velocities of overland flow.

Gravel Filter Berm

A gravel filter berm is constructed on rights-of-way or traffic areas within a construction site to retain sediment by using a filter berm of gravel or crushed rock.

Silt Fence

Use of a silt fence reduces the transport of coarse sediment from a construction site by providing a temporary physical barrier to sediment and reducing the runoff velocities of overland flow.

Vegetated Strip

Vegetated strips reduce the transport of coarse sediment from a construction site by providing a temporary physical barrier to sediment and reducing the runoff velocities of overland flow.

Straw Wattles

Straw wattles are temporary erosion and sediment control barriers consisting of straw that is wrapped in biodegradable tubular plastic or similar encasing material. They reduce the velocity and can spread the flow of rill and sheet runoff, and can capture and retain sediment.

Sediment Trap

A sediment trap is a small temporary ponding area with a gravel outlet used to collect and store sediment from sites cleared and/or graded during construction.

Temporary Sediment Pond

Sediment ponds remove sediment from runoff originating from disturbed areas of the site. Sediment ponds are typically designed to remove sediment no smaller than medium silt (0.02 mm).

Construction Stormwater Chemical Treatment

Turbidity is difficult to control once fine particles are suspended in stormwater runoff from a construction site. Sedimentation ponds are effective at removing larger particulate matter by gravity settling, but are ineffective at removing smaller particulates such as clay and fine silt. Sediment ponds are typically designed to remove sediment no smaller than medium silt (0.02 mm). Chemical treatment may be used to reduce the turbidity of stormwater runoff.

Construction Stormwater Filtration

Filtration removes sediment from runoff originating from disturbed areas of the site.

Stabilize Soils

Exposed and unworked soils shall be stabilized by application of effective BMPs that protect the soil from the erosive forces of raindrops, flowing water, and wind.

Temporary and Permanent Seeding

Seeding is intended to reduce erosion by stabilizing exposed soils. A well-established vegetative cover is one of the most effective methods of reducing erosion.

Mulching

The purpose of mulching soils is to provide immediate temporary protection from erosion. Mulch also enhances plant establishment by conserving moisture, holding fertilizer, seed, and topsoil in place, and moderating soil temperatures.

Nets and Blankets

Erosion control nets and blankets are intended to prevent erosion and hold seed and mulch in place on steep slopes and in channels so that vegetation can become well established. In addition, some nets and blankets can be used to permanently reinforce turf to protect drainage ways during high flows.

Plastic Covering

Plastic covering provides immediate, short-term erosion protection to slopes and disturbed areas.

Sodding

The purpose of sodding is to establish permanent turf for immediate erosion protection and to stabilize drainage ways where concentrated overland flow will occur.

Topsoiling

Addition of topsoil will provide a suitable growth medium for final site stabilization with vegetation. While not a permanent cover practice in itself, topsoiling is an integral component of providing permanent cover in those areas where there is an unsuitable soil surface for plant growth. Native soils and disturbed soils that have been organically amended not only retain much more stormwater, but they also serve as effective biofilters for urban pollutants and, by supporting more vigorous plant growth, reduce the water, fertilizer and pesticides needed to support installed landscapes. Topsoil does not include any subsoils but only the material from the top several inches, including organic debris.

Polyacrylamide for Soil Erosion Protection

Polyacrylamide (PAM) is used on construction sites to prevent soil erosion. Applying PAM to bare soil in advance of a rain event significantly reduces erosion and controls sediment in two ways. First, PAM increases the soil's available pore volume, thus increasing infiltration through flocculation and reducing the quantity of stormwater runoff. Second, it increases flocculation of suspended particles and aids in their deposition, thus reducing stormwater runoff turbidity and improving water quality.

Surface Roughening

Surface roughening aids in the establishment of vegetative cover, reduces runoff velocity, increases infiltration, and provides for sediment trapping through the provision of a rough soil surface.

Gradient Terraces

Gradient terraces reduce erosion damage by intercepting surface runoff and conducting it to a stable outlet at a non-erosive velocity.

Dust Control

Dust control prevents wind transport of dust from disturbed soil surfaces onto roadways, drainage ways, and surface waters.

Small Project Construction Stormwater Pollution Prevention

To prevent the discharge of sediment and other pollutants to the maximum extent practicable from small construction projects.

Protect Slopes

Design, construct, and phase cut and fill slopes in a manner that will minimize erosion, considering soil type and its potential for erosion.

Temporary and Permanent Seeding

Seeding is intended to reduce erosion by stabilizing exposed soils. A well-established vegetative cover is one of the most effective methods of reducing erosion.

Surface Roughening

Surface roughening aids in the establishment of vegetative cover, reduces runoff velocity, increases infiltration, and provides for sediment trapping through the provision of a rough soil surface.

Gradient Terraces

Gradient terraces reduce erosion damage by intercepting surface runoff and conducting it to a stable outlet at a non-erosive velocity.

Interceptor Dike and Swale

Provide a ridge of compacted soil, or a ridge with an upslope swale, at the top or base of a disturbed slope or along the perimeter of a disturbed construction area to convey stormwater. Using the dike and/or swale to intercept the runoff from unprotected areas and direct it to areas where erosion can be controlled. This can prevent storm runoff from entering the work area or sediment-laden runoff from leaving the construction site.

Grass-Lined Channels

Channels lined with grass can convey runoff without erosion, and will provide some degree of treatment and infiltration.

Pipe Slope Drains

Piping can be used to convey stormwater anytime water needs to be diverted away from or over bare soil to prevent gullies, channel erosion, and saturation of slide-prone soils.

Subsurface Drains

Drains below the surface can intercept, collect, and convey ground water to a satisfactory outlet. These can be a perforated pipe or conduit below the ground surface. The perforated pipe provides a dewatering mechanism to drain excessively wet soils, provide a stable base for construction, improve stability of structures with shallow foundations, or to reduce hydrostatic pressure to improve slope stability.

Level Spreader

To provide a temporary outlet for dikes and diversions consisting of an excavated depression constructed at zero grade across a slope. To convert concentrated runoff to sheet flow and release it onto areas stabilized by existing vegetation or an engineered filter strip.

Check Dams

Construction of small dams across a swale or ditch reduces the velocity of concentrated flow and dissipates energy at the check dam.

Triangular Silt Dike (Geotextile-Encased Check Dam)

Triangular silt dikes may be used as check dams, for perimeter protection, for temporary soil stockpile protection, for drop inlet protection, or as a temporary interceptor dike.

Protect Drain Inlets

Storm drain inlets operable during construction shall be protected so that stormwater runoff does not enter the conveyance system without first being filtered or treated to remove sediment.

Storm Drain Inlet Protection

To prevent coarse sediment from entering drainage systems prior to permanent stabilization of the disturbed area:

Stabilize Channels And Outlets

Temporary on-site conveyance channels shall be designed, constructed, and stabilized to prevent erosion from the expected flow velocity of a 2-year, 24-hour frequency storm for the developed condition.

Channel Lining

Lining will protect erodible channels by providing a channel liner using either blankets or riprap.

Outlet Protection

Outlet protection prevents scour at conveyance outlets and minimizes the potential for downstream erosion by reducing the velocity of concentrated stormwater flows.

Control Pollutants

All pollutants, including waste materials and demolition debris, that occur on site during construction shall be handled and disposed of in a manner that does not cause contamination of stormwater.

Concrete Handling

Concrete work can generate process water and slurry that contain fine particles and high pH, both of which can violate water quality standards in the receiving water. Concrete handling is intended to minimize and eliminate concrete process water and slurry from entering waters of the state.

Sawcutting and Surfacing Pollution Prevention

Sawcutting and surfacing operations generate slurry and process water that contain fine particles and high pH (concrete cutting), both of which can violate the water quality standards in the receiving water. Collection of this water is intended to minimize and eliminate process water and slurry from entering waters of the State.

Control De-Watering

Foundation, vault, and trench de-watering water shall be discharged into a controlled conveyance system prior to discharge to a sediment pond.

Maintain BMPs

Temporary and permanent erosion and sediment control BMPs shall be maintained and repaired as needed to assure continued performance of their intended function. Maintenance and repair shall be conducted in accordance with BMPs.

Manage the Project

Development projects shall be phased where feasible in order to prevent, to the maximum extent practicable, the transport of sediment from the development site during construction. Revegetation of exposed areas and maintenance of that vegetation shall be an integral part of the clearing activities for any phase.

APPENDIX II. ESTIMATION OF COSTS FOR CONTROLLING SEDIMENT RELEASES AT CONSTRUCTION SITES

EPA described the costs of the Phase II program in Chapter 4 of the economic analysis (U.S. EPA, 1995). This appendix is a summary of that description, and the figures presented come from that document. The costs were divided into 4 categories: municipal costs, construction costs, federal costs and state costs. Each of these was considered separately.

Construction costs:

Construction costs were described in parts 4-8 to 4-25. All the cost calculations are based on 1998 dollar value.

Because the Phase II program targets construction areas of 1 to 5 acres of land, the cost analysis are done for these land sizes. EPA divided the construction costs into two parts. The first part requires the owners and operators of construction sites disturbing one to five acres of land to plan and implement erosion and sediment control BMPs. The second part requires the implementation of post-construction stormwater runoff controls on construction sites located in Phase II municipalities.

Erosion and sediment control costs

EPA developed a national level cost estimate for implementing erosion and sediment controls on sites that disturb between one and 5 acres. EPA estimated a per site compliance cost for sites of one, three, and five acres and multiplied the cost by the total number of Phase II construction starts expected to incur incremental cost in these size categories to obtain a national cost estimate. EPA used construction start data from fourteen municipalities and 1994 Census Bureau construction permit data to estimate the number of construction starts disturbing between one and five acres of land. Of the estimated 129,675 construction starts likely to incur incremental costs, EPA expects that 110,223 (85%) will require erosion and sediment controls to comply with the regulation.

Exhibit 4–4. Summary Characteristics of Municipalities Where Construction Start Data was Collected

Municipality	Population 1996 (Estimates)[1]	Population Growth 1990 to 1996	Median Household Income (1989)	Area (Sq. Mi.)
Austin, TX	541,278	+14.7%	$25,414	217.8
Baltimore County, MD	720,662	+4.1%	$38,837	599.0
Cary, NC	75,676	+70.5%	$46,259	31.2
Fort Collins, CO	104,196	+19.1%	$28,826	41.2
Lacey, WA	27,381	+42.0%	$29,726	10.1
Loudoun County, VA	133,493	+54.9%	$52,064	520.0
New Britain, CT	71,512	–5.3%	$30,121	13.3
Olympia, WA	39,006	+15.6%	$27,785	16.1
Prince George's County, MD	770,633	+5.6%	$43,127	486.0
Raleigh, NC	243,835	+15.0%	$32,451	88.1
South Bend, IN	102,100	–3.2%	$24,131	36.4
Tallahassee, FL	136,751	+9.6%	$34,764	63.3
Tucson, AZ	449,002	+9.1%	$21,748	156.3
Waukesha, WI	60,197	+5.8%	$36,192	17.3
United States	265 million	+6.6%	$35,225	

Source: US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. [http://www.census.gov].
[1] US Census Bureau Data (1996).

Per-Site Compliance Costs: Installation and O&M.

EPA used standard cost estimates from R.S. Means (R.S. Means, 1997a and 1997b) and the WEF database to estimate construction BMP costs for 27 model sites of typical site conditions in the United States. The model sites included three different site sizes (one, three, and five acres), three slope variations (3%, 7%, and 12%), and three soil erosivity conditions (low, medium, and high). EPA used the WEF database to determine BMP combinations appropriate to the model site conditions. For example, sites with shallow slopes and a low erosivity require few BMPs, while larger, steeper, and more erosive sites required more BMPs. Detailed site plans, assumptions, and BMPs that could be used are presented in Appendices B–2 and B–3. Based on the assumption that any combination of site factors is equally likely to occur on a given site, EPA averaged the matrix of estimated costs to develop an average cost for one-, three-, and five-acre starts for all soil erodibilities and slopes.

Exhibit 4–6. BMPs Used for the Model Sites

Site Size (acres)	Soil Erodibility	Slope 3%	Slope 7%	Slope 12%
1	low	a	a,b	a,c,e
	med	a,b	a,c,e	a,c,e
	high	a,c,e	a,c,e	c,e,f,g1
3	low	a,b	a,c,e	c,d,e,f,g2
	med	a,c,e	a,c,e	c,d,e,f,g2
	high	a,c,e	c,d,e,f,g2	c,d,e,f,g2
5	low	a,c,d,e	c,d,e,f,g3	c,d,e,f,g3
	med	a,c,d,e	c,d,e,f,g3	c,d,e,f,g3
	high	c,d,e,f,g3	c,d,e,f,g3	c,d,e,f,g3

a = silt fence
b = mulch
c = seed and mulch
d = stabilized construction entrance
e = stone check dam
f = earthen dike directing runoff to sediment trap
g = sediment trap (1=1,800 cf, 2=5,400 cf, 3=9,000 cf)

Costs related to each BMP and the description of the BMP were shown in Exhibit 4-7 of the original document.

Exhibit 4–8. Estimated Cost of BMPs for the Model Sites (1998 dollars)

Site Size (acres)	Soil Erodibility	Cost by Slope 3%	Cost by Slope 7%	Cost by Slope 12%	Average Cost
1	low	$317	$814	$1,422	$1,206
	med	$814	$1,422	$1,422	
	high	$1,422	$1,422	$1,799	
3	low	$1,978	$3,804	$6,047	$4,598
	med	$3,804	$3,804	$6,047	
	high	$3,804	$6,047	$6,047	
5	low	$6,245	$9,334	$9,519	$8,709
	med	$6,245	$9,334	$9,519	
	high	$9,334	$9,334	$9,519	

Per-Site Compliance Costs: Administrative.

EPA then estimated administrative costs per construction site for the following elements required under the Phase II rule: submittal of a notice of intent (application) for permit coverage; notification to municipalities; development of a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP); record retention; and submittal of a notice of termination. The average total administrative cost per site was estimated to be $937.

Exhibit 4–10. Estimated Other Administrative Phase II Construction Costs Per Site (1998 Dollars)

Administrative Requirement	Cost
NOI	$126.50
Municipal Notification	$17.10
SWPPP	$772.25
Record Retention	$4.51
NOT	$17.10
Estimated Total Cost (per site)	$937.46

Summing the average BMP costs and the administrative costs yields a total compliance cost of $2,143 for sites disturbing between one and two acres of land, $5,535 for sites disturbing between two and four acres of land, and $9,646 for sites disturbing between four and five acres of land. To estimate national level incremental annual costs for Phase II construction starts, EPA multiplied the total costs of compliance for one to two acre, two to four acre, and four to five acre sites by the total number of Phase II construction starts within each of those size categories. This yielded an estimated annual compliance cost of approximately $499.8 million (based on 110,223 construction starts in 1998).

EPA anticipates that 19,452 (15%) of the estimated Phase II incremental construction universe will qualify for a waiver from program requirements by meeting one of two conditions. Construction sites can be waived if they are either located in areas with low rainfall potential or if water quality analyses show that there is no need for regulation. EPA estimates the incremental administrative cost associated with preparing and submitting a waiver to be approximately $665,000 (1998). Total costs (national compliance and waiver costs) resulting from implementation of the Phase II erosion and sediment control provision are estimated to be **$500.4 million**.

Exhibit 4–11. Estimated National Phase II Construction Compliance Costs by Climatic Zones for Year 1998 (1998 Dollars)

Climatic Zone	Representative City	Number of Starts 1–2 Acres	Number of Starts 2–4 Acres	Number of Starts 4–5 Acres	Total Starts	Costs for Starts 1–2 Acres	Costs for Starts 2–4 Acres	Costs for Starts 4–5 Acres	Total Costs
A	Portland, OR	1,683	1,471	659	3,813	$3,608,528	$8,141,052	$6,360,054	$18,356,897
B	Boise, ID	1,508	1,345	576	3,429	$3,232,932	$7,443,548	$5,556,280	$16,455,088
C	Fresno, CA	2,388	2,018	974	5,380	$5,118,068	$11,171,812	$9,400,679	$26,039,422
D	Las Vegas, NV	7,154	6,256	3,035	16,445	$15,335,047	$34,628,344	$29,276,500	$80,306,157
E	Denver, CO	1,787	1,613	636	4,036	$3,829,714	$8,928,128	$6,135,764	$18,893,606
F	Bismarck, ND	560	469	156	1,185	$1,199,916	$2,595,370	$1,508,877	$5,304,163
G	Helena, MT	1,067	921	348	2,336	$2,287,796	$5,098,377	$3,354,650	$10,740,823
H	Amarillo, TX	3,295	2,838	1,152	7,285	$7,063,767	$15,708,383	$11,110,516	$33,882,666
I	San Antonio, TX	1,105	960	414	2,479	$2,368,045	$5,314,569	$3,997,033	$11,679,647
K	Duluth, MN	2,957	1,796	326	5,078	$6,339,106	$9,939,565	$3,141,089	$19,419,760
M	Des Moines, IA	9,335	7,599	2,695	19,629	$20,009,581	$42,063,182	$26,002,165	$88,074,928
N	Nashville, TN	5,801	4,707	1,705	12,212	$12,434,357	$26,052,990	$16,445,128	$54,932,475
P	Atlanta, GA	5,157	2,956	1,127	9,241	$11,054,430	$16,364,835	$10,875,252	$38,294,517
R	Hartford, CT	6,909	5,324	2,116	14,348	$14,808,848	$29,468,120	$20,412,901	$64,689,869
T	Charleston, SC	1,194	675	263	2,132	$2,560,342	$3,736,824	$2,535,496	$8,832,662
V	Hawaii	504	423	218	1,145	$1,080,648	$2,340,928	$2,099,447	$5,521,023
W,X,Y	Alaska	22	20	8	50	$47,885	$112,127	$72,563	$232,575
Total		52,426	41,389	16,408	110,223	$112,379,010	$229,108,154	$158,284,394	$499,771,558

Note: Number of sites include only those where storm water BMPs are not currently required by Federal or State programs. Totals may not add because of rounding.

Exhibit 4–12. Phase II Erosion and Sediment Control Annual Costs

Construction Costs	Universe	Estimated Total National Annual Costs (1998 dollars)
Compliance Costs	110,223	$499,771,558
Waiver Costs*	19,452	$665,064
Total	129,675	$500,436,622

*Based on an engineering assistant's wage of $34.19 per hour. U.S. Department of Labor, 1996.

EPA also estimated incremental costs attributable to the post-construction runoff control measures. The Phase II municipal program requires municipalities to develop, implement, and enforce a program that addresses stormwater runoff from new development and redevelopment sites on which land disturbance is greater than one acre and that discharge into a regulated MS4. To develop a cost estimate associated with this measure, EPA estimated a per site BMP cost, including operation and maintenance, for 12 model sites of varying size (1, 3, 5, and 7 acres) and imperviousness (35%, 65%, and 85%). The per site BMP cost was then multiplied by the total number of multi-family, institutional, and commercial construction starts that are located in Phase II urbanized areas to obtain a national cost estimate. Using this total of 13,364 postconstruction starts, EPA estimated a range of national costs associated with this measure from $44.6 to $178.3 million (see Appendix B–4). EPA estimates total annual costs to construction operators, including implementation of erosion and sediment controls and post-construction controls, to be between **$545.0 – $678.7 million.**

Exhibit 4–15. Estimated Post-Construction Runoff Control Costs

Area	35% Impervious (Multi-Family Residential)	65% Impervious (Multi-Family/ Commercial/ Institutional)	85% Impervious (Commercial)	Total Cost (1998 dollars)
1 Acre	$503,163	$14,318,035	$25,530,478	$40,351,676
3 Acres	$1,486,961	$29,571,535	$29,588,931	$60,647,426
5 Acres	$2,001,641	$11,835,630	$9,151,038	$22,988,309
7 Acres	$3,863,272	$23,910,571	$26,494,414	$54,268,258
Total Cost	$7,855,037	$79,635,771	$90,764,861	$178,255,669

Summary of results of the total costs of the phase II program are shown below:

Exhibit 4–21. Potential Annual Costs for Phase II Storm Water Regulation

Phase II Element	Universe	Estimated Total National Annual Costs (1998 dollars)
Municipal	32,458,000 Households	$297,318,623
Construction	129,675 Erosion & Sediment Control Starts and 13,364 Post-Construction Starts	$545,000,539 – $678,692,291
Federal and State	53 States and Territories	$5,318,668
Total		$847,637,830 – $981,329,582

Reduced Sediment Delivery From Construction Starts:

To estimate reduced sediment delivery from Phase II construction starts, the US ACE developed a model based on EPA's 27 model sites to estimate sediment loads from construction starts with and without Phase II controls (US ACE, 1998). The US ACE model uses the construction site version of the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) to generate sediment delivery estimates for 15 climatic regions with each of the following variations: three site sizes (one, three, and five acres), three soil erodibility levels (low, medium, and high), three slopes (3%, 7%, and 12%), and the BMP combinations from EPA's 27 model sites. The 15 climatic regions represent the various rainfall and temperature conditions throughout the United States. Sediment delivery represents the quantity of sediment that BMPs placed at the base of the hill slope are unable to capture. EPA estimated that the average reduction in soil loss from the model sites implementing BMPs would be 89.6 tons per site. (Calculations in Exhibit 4-24)

To determine the reduction in soil loss using the estimated 80% effectiveness rate, EPA multiplied the weighted average soil loss per start (89.6 tons) by 80%. This resulted in an estimated reduction in soil loss of 71.7 tons per site. Multiplying this reduction by the 110,223 construction starts expected to implement erosion and sediment controls for the year 1998, results in an estimated 7.9 million ton reduction in soil loss annually.

Exhibit 4–25. National Reduction Estimates for Municipalities and Construction Starts (tons/year)

Phase II Element	20% Reduction	80% Reduction
Municipal TSS Loading	639,115	4,062,815
Soil loss from Construction Sites	1,975,196	7,900,785

Summary

EPA has not presented the total cost of prevention of sediments leaving the site per ton of the sediment. ES.11 (in executive summary) describes only the costs effectiveness related to the Municipal TSS loading reduction. It seems that by a simple calculation from the two former exhibits (4-24 and 4-25) that the total cost assuming 80% reduction in the sediments would be between \$69 - \$86 per ton of sediment.