

Stormwater Tips You Should Know

What happens to rain

Do you ever think about what happens to a drop of rain that falls onto the ground? It may land on a tree and evaporate; it may land on a farm field and be absorbed into the soil; or it may land on a rooftop, driveway, or road that travels down the street into a stream or storm drain. Any precipitation that does not evaporate or soak into the ground, but instead pools and travels downhill is considered stormwater. Stormwater is also referred to as stormwater runoff and polluted runoff. Increased development across York and Lancaster Counties' watersheds has made stormwater runoff the fastest-growing source of pollution to the creeks, river, and the Chesapeake Bay.

The Solution(s)

Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) are designed to prevent sediments and other pollutants carried by stormwater from running off impervious surfaces into streams and other water sources.

A good Definition to Know: **BMP (BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE)** — Activities, facilities, control measures, planning or procedures used to minimize accelerated erosion and sedimentation and manage stormwater to protect, maintain, reclaim, and restore the quality of waters and the existing and designated uses of waters within this commonwealth before, during and after earth disturbance activities. Below are some ways in which you can plan for stormwater management on your property.

For Agricultural Landowners:

- Ask for a site visit to get assistance in siting your high tunnels from Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
 - Lancaster Field Office: Heather Grove, 717-874-2530
 - York Field Office: Eric Samus, 717-894-3001
- Consider stormwater management on your property as a whole, not just immediately adjacent to your structures.
- Make use of vegetative filter strips, diversions, riparian forest buffers, or water catchment basins around your high tunnels and elsewhere on your property to allow for management and infiltration of runoff.
- When possible, maintain a vegetated area of at least 20 feet between adjacent high tunnels to minimize the effect of runoff coming from multiple structures in the same area.
- When hiring a professional, ask for experience with low impact design techniques and use of green infrastructure techniques as part of the solution.
- If you do not have a written Ag Conservation Plan (Ag Erosion & Sedimentation Control Plan) – get one in place with assistance from the county conservation district or start your own working

with an experienced plan writer. The documentation serves as a land management plan and includes your goals and objectives for your property. CWQE can get you started with an onsite self-assessment using the Farm*A*Syst program. Call CWQE Staff at 855-227-1202.

For Municipalities:

- Adopt and implement stormwater management ordinances that control both the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff.
- Be open to requests for modifications and waivers when low impact design practices from a site-wide perspective are offered as part of the solution.
- Know there is not a one-size-fits-all in stormwater management. All landscapes are unique, and there are always options, some better than others, for the watershed and the property owners.
- Adopt open space policies that encourage naturally vegetated areas and minimize impervious areas such as parking lots, streets and roads. Check your roadway widths to determine if they are oversized.
- Promote and support the use of riparian stream buffers that encourage vegetated and forested buffer areas along streams and other water bodies as part of the solution to stormwater.
- Use structural and vegetative practices during construction such as sediment basins, silt fencing, and temporary gravel construction entrances.
- Use post-construction BMPs such as detention basins, constructed wetlands, grassed waterways, sand filters, retention ponds, municipal street sweeping, storm sewer inlet filters, and oil/grit separators.
- Consider a code audit – you might be surprised what barriers to good design and water resource protection are lurking in your ordinances.



Temporary High Tunnel for specialty vegetable production



Riparian Buffer in Suburban Landscape