INF-4: Bioinfiltration Fact Sheet

> ***Also known as:***
> - *Rain gardens*
> - *Infiltration planter*

Bioretention
Source: Geosyntec Consultants

Bioinfiltration facilities are designed for partial infiltration of runoff and partial biotreatment. These facilities are similar to bioretention devices with underdrains but they include a raised underdrain above a gravel sump designed to facilitate infiltration. These facilities can be used in areas where there are no hazards associated with infiltration, but infiltration of the full DCV may not be feasible due to low infiltration rates or high depths of fill. These facilities may not result in retention of the full DCV but they can be used to achieve the maximum feasible infiltration and ET.

Feasibility Screening Considerations

- Bioinfiltration shall pass infeasibility screening criteria for infiltration BMPs (**TGD Section 2.4.2.4**) to be considered for use.
- Infiltration rates are allowed to be less than 0.3 inches per hour.

Opportunity Criteria

- Land use may include commercial, residential, mixed use, institutional, and subdivisions. Bioretention may also be applied in parking lot islands, cul-de-sacs, traffic circles, road shoulders, and road medians.
- Drainage area is ≤ 5 acres, preferrably ≤ 1 acre.
- Area is available for infiltration.
- Site slope is less than 15 percent.

OC-Specific Design Criteria and Considerations

- [ ] Placement of BMPs should observe geotechnical recommendations with respect to geological hazards (e.g. landslides, liquefaction zones, erosion, etc.) and set-backs (e.g., foundations, utilities, roadways, etc.)
- [ ] Depth to mounded seasonally high groundwater shall not be less than 5 feet.
- [ ] If sheet flow is conveyed to the treatment area over stabilized grassed areas, the site must be graded in such a way that minimizes erosive conditions; sheet flow velocities should not exceed 1 foot per second.
- [ ] Ponding depth should not exceed 18 inches; fencing may be required if ponding depth exceeds 6 inches to mitigate the risk of drowning.
- [ ] Planting/storage media shall be based on the recommendations contained in MISC-1: Planting/Storage Media
- [ ] The minimum amended soil depth is 1.5 feet (3 feet is preferred).
- [ ] The depth of gravel below the underdrain elevation must be designed so that the effective depth that would infiltrate in 48 hours is stored in the gravel layer.
- [ ] Underdrain should be placed at the top of the gravel drainage layer to facilitate infiltration.

- ☐ Infiltration pathways may need to be restricted due to the close proximity of roads, foundations, or other infrastructure. A geomembrane liner, or other equivalent water proofing, may be placed along the vertical walls to reduce lateral flows. This liner should have a minimum thickness of 30 mils.
- ☐ Plant materials should be tolerant of summer drought, ponding fluctuations, and saturated soil conditions for 48 hours; native plant species and/or hardy cultivars that are not invasive and do not require chemical fertilizers or pesticides should be used to the maximum extent feasible
- ☐ The bioinfiltration area should be covered with 2-4 inches (average 3 inches) of mulch at startup and an additional placement of 1-2 inches of mulch should be added annually.
- ☐ An overflow device is required at the top of the ponding depth.
- ☐ Dispersed flow or energy dissipation (i.e. splash rocks) for piped inlets should be provided at basin inlet to prevent erosion.
- ☐ Planting/storage media shall be based on the recommendations contained in MISC-1: Planting/Storage Media
- ☐ Ponding area side slopes shall be 3H:1V.

Simple Sizing Method for Bioinfiltration

If the Simple Design Capture Volume Sizing Method described in **Appendix** III.3.1 is used to size a bioinfiltration facility, the user selects the basin geometry and then determines the volume retained. The sizing steps are as follows:

Step 1: Select Bioinfiltration Geometry

Determine the desired ponding depth (not to exceed 1.5 ft), gravel depth, surface area, and media saturated hydraulic conductivity. A target media hydraulic conductivity of 5 inches per hour is recommended.

Step 2: Verify that the Ponding Depth will Draw Down within 48 Hours

The ponding area drawdown time can be calculated using the following equation:

$$DD_P = (d_P / K_{MEDIA}) \times 12$$

Where:

DD_P = time to drain ponded water, hours

$d_{EFFECTIVE}$ = total effective depth of water stored in bioretention area, ft (from Step 3)

K_{MEDIA} = media design infiltration rate, in/hr (equivalent to the media hydraulic conductivity with a factor of safety of 2; K_{MEDIA} of 2.5 in/hr should be used as a default unless other information is available to support an alternative value.)

If the drawdown time exceeds 48 hours, adjust ponding depth and/or media filter until 48 hour drawdown time is achieved.

Step 3: Verify That Gravel Depth is Designed for 48 Hour Drawdown

In order to demonstrate that bioinfiltration systems have been designed to achieve the maximum feasible retention (See Appendix XI), the gravel depth below the underdrains must be designed with a thickness such that it draws down in 48 hours.

$$DD_G = ((d_G \times n_G) / K_{DESIGN}) \times 12$$

Where:

DD_G = time to drain gravel layer, hours

n_G = bioretention gravel layer porosity; 0.35 may be assumed where other information is not available

d_G = bioretention gravel layer depth, ft

K_{DESIGN} = bioretention design infiltration rate, in/hr (See **Appendix VII**)

If DD_G is less than 48 hours, adjust d_G until DD_G is at least 48 hours or greater.

Step 4: Determine the BMP Area Needed

The required infiltrating area (i.e. the surface area of the top of the media layer) can be calculated using the following equation:

$A = DCV/ d_{EFFECTIVE}$

Where:

A = required infiltrating area, sq-ft (measured at the media surface)

DCV = design capture volume, cu-ft (see Step 1)

$d_{EFFECTIVE}$ = total effective depth of water stored in bioretention area, ft

$d_{EFFECTIVE} = (d_P + n_M d_M + n_G d_G)$

d_P = bioretention ponding depth, ft (should be less than or equal to 1.5 ft)

n_M = bioretention media porosity

d_M = bioretention media depth, ft

n_G = bioretention gravel layer porosity; 0.35 may be assumed where other information is not available

d_G = bioretention gravel layer depth, ft

This does not include the side slopes, access roads, etc. which would increase bioretention footprint. If the area required is greater than the selected basin area, adjust surface area or adjust ponding depth and recalculate required area until the required area is achieved.

Capture Efficiency Method for Bioinfiltration

Option 1: Accounting for Retention plus Biotreatment in Capture Efficiency Calculation

To size bioinfiltration facilities using the Capture Efficiency Method, the system should be divided into its retention and biotreatment components and analyzed as a treatment train per instructions in **Appendix III.5** Sizing Approaches for Treatment Trains and Hybrid Systems.

- Retention Storage: Water stored in gravel below underdrains.
- Biotreatment Storage: Water stored in surface ponding and media pore space.

The retention component should be analyzed as the first component of the treatment train, and will yield a capture efficiency that is used as an input to the biotreatment sizing approach.

The retention component should be sized such that the depth of gravel drains in 48 hours at the design infiltration rate.

Option 2: Sizing of Biotreatment Only; Presumptive Approach for Retention

Alternatively, bioinfiltration BMPs can be sized accounting for only the capture efficiency of the biotreatment component (See BIO-1: Bioretention with Underdrains for sizing methods). The retention component should be sized such that the depth of gravel drains in 48 hours or greater at the design infiltration rate. This provides presumption that water is infiltrated without quantifying the volume that is infiltrated. It is inherently a conservative sizing method.

Configuration for Use in a Treatment Train

- Bioinfiltration areas are inherently a treatment train BMP because they include both retention and biotreatment components.
- Bioinfiltration areas may be preceded in a treatment train by HSCs in the drainage area, which would reduce the required volume of the bioretention cell.
- Bioinfiltration areas can be incorporated in a treatment train to provide enhanced water quality treatment and reductions in runoff volume and rate.

Additional References for Design Guidance

- CASQA BMP Handbook for New and Redevelopment: http://www.cabmphandbooks.com/Documents/Development/TC-32.pdf
- SMC LID Manual (pp 68): http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/guest75/pub/All_Projects/SoCal_LID_Manual/SoCalLID_Manual_FINAL_040910.pdf
- Los Angeles County Stormwater BMP Design and Maintenance Manual, Chapter 5: http://dpw.lacounty.gov/DES/design_manuals/StormwaterBMPDesignandMaintenance.pdf
- San Diego County LID Handbook Appendix 4 (Factsheet 7): http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/docs/LID-Appendices.pdf
- Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Stormwater Technical Manual, Chapter 4: http://www.laschools.org/employee/design/fs-studies-and-reports/download/white_paper_report_material/Storm_Water_Technical_Manual_2009-opt-red.pdf?version_id=76975850
- County of Los Angeles Low Impact Development Standards Manual, Chapter 5: http://dpw.lacounty.gov/wmd/LA_County_LID_Manual.pdf