



DEPARTMENT OF
**ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY • MARYLAND

Non-Structural Maintenance for Stormwater Ponds

What are wet and dry ponds?

A pond is a type of stormwater management facility designed to collect rainwater and pollutants and prevent downstream flooding. Wet ponds always have a pool of water. Dry ponds only have water after a storm event. Most ponds located throughout Montgomery County are stormwater management ponds, even ones that are community amenities. Ponds can have many different designs, including ponds with concrete channels, dry ponds with sand filters on the pond bottom, and ponds that provided wetland habitat around the edges.

Why are ponds important?

- Remove pollutants
- Improve health of streams and rivers
- Help to make our waters fishable and swimmable
- Improve the quality of the Chesapeake Bay

Why is it important to keep your pond maintained?

Unmaintained ponds may:

- Not remove pollutants as intended, sending polluted water to streams and rivers
- Become filled with sediment and debris, so water cannot be stored in the facility, which may lead to downstream flooding and erosion
- Look unsightly with excessive growth of unwanted weeds or algae
- Cost more to fix problems if left unchecked
- Lead to a dam breach if overgrown vegetation and trees compromise the pond safety over time. This would cause flooding and damage to surrounding properties and adjacent homes.
- Have inlet and outlet areas blocked by excessive growth or debris. This will cause water to back up or pond on adjacent properties.

Who is responsible for this maintenance?

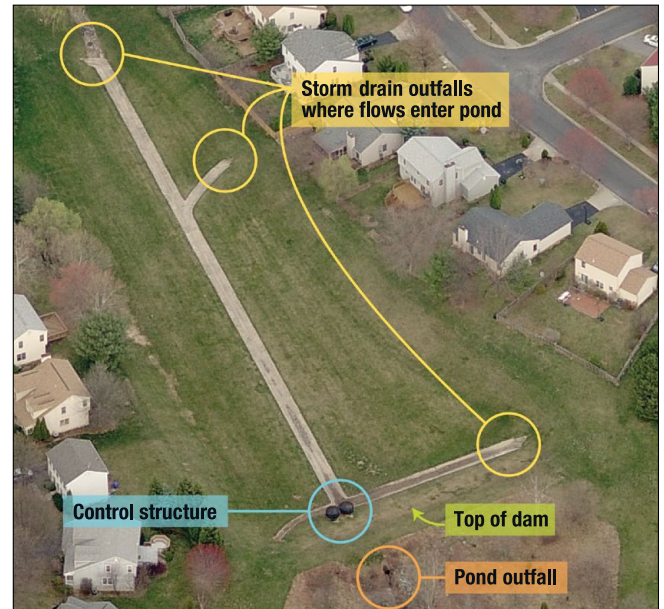
As the property owner, you are responsible for:

**Grass Cutting • Trash Removal
Vegetation Management**

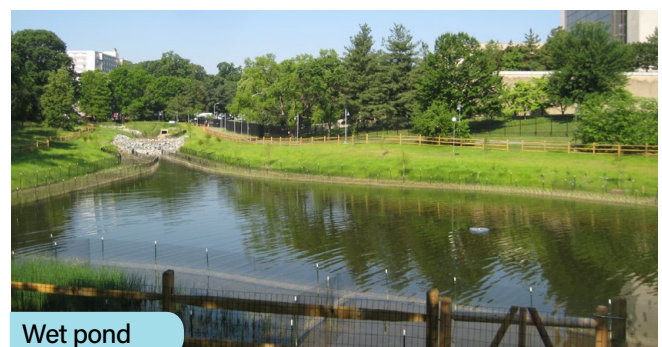
Please visit the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) website for a list of approved contractors. DEP-approved contractors are recommended but not required for non-structural maintenance.

To learn about your structural maintenance responsibilities, please see our Structural Maintenance Fact Sheets at

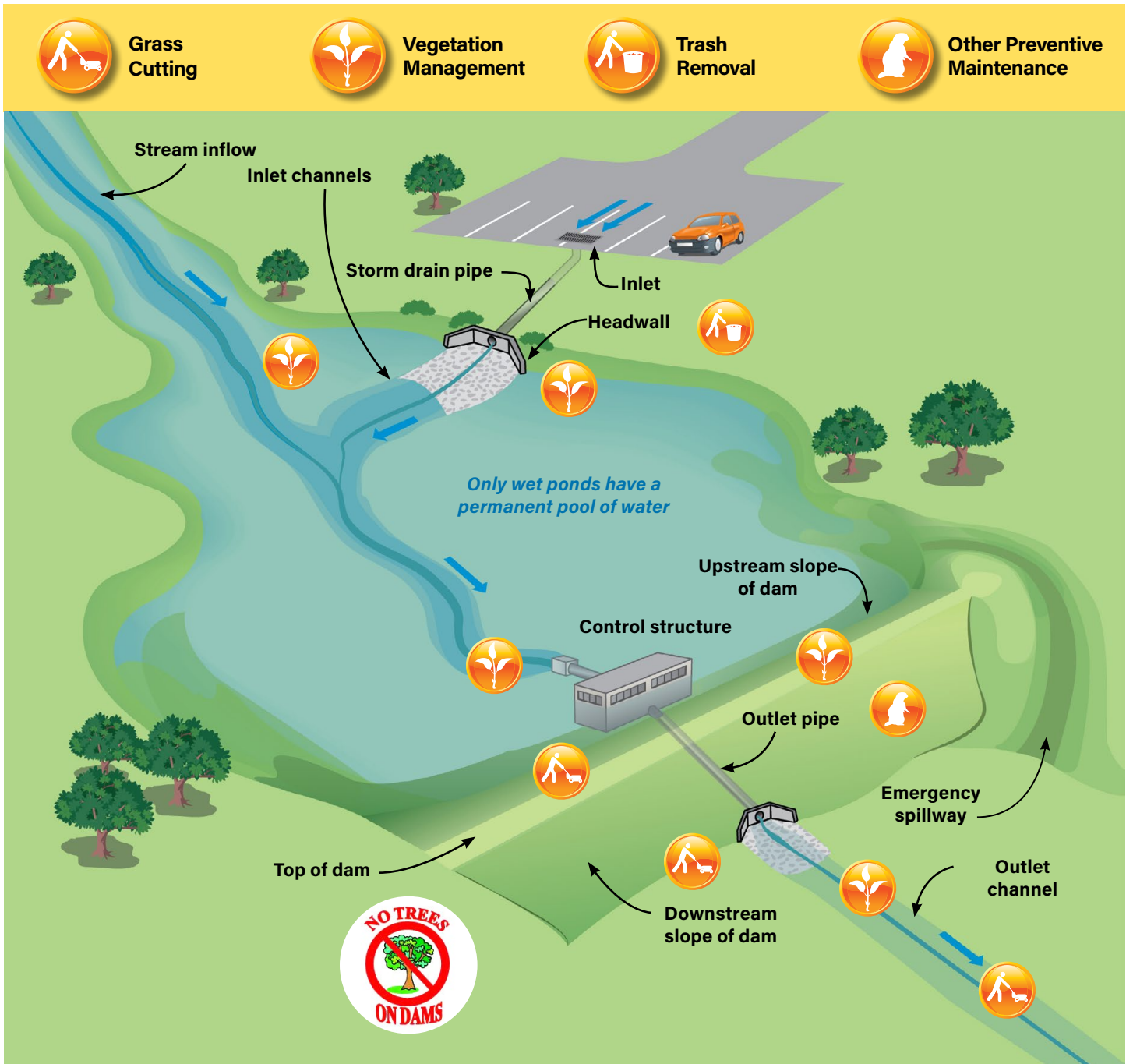
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/stormwater



Dry pond with concrete channel



As rainwater flows over hard surfaces and lawns it picks up pollutants such as sediment, trash, pesticides from lawns, nutrients from fertilizer or pet waste, and oil and grease from cars. Ponds can help to reduce this pollution.



What if I need help or have additional questions?

DEP can answer your questions and provide additional guidance about maintaining your facility. Please e-mail us at Askdep@montgomerycountymd.gov, call the Montgomery County Customer Service Center at 3-1-1, or visit our website, www.montgomerycountymd.gov/stormwater.

Maintenance 101 — What and How

How will I know what maintenance is required?

Montgomery County regulations require that you perform ongoing routine **grass cutting, trash removal, and vegetation management** of your stormwater facility. If the work described below is not done regularly, you could receive a notice of violation. *Locations for these maintenance activities are shown on page 2*



GRASS CUTTING

Mow grass in the pond area **at least twice a year**.

- Downstream slope of dam
- Top of the dam
- Upstream slope of dam (dry pond only)
- 25 feet around the control structure (dry pond only)
- Inlet channels, around headwalls, and pipes within pond area (where safe and accessible)
- Outlet channel

The most commonly forgotten non-structural maintenance is mowing and removal of trees and woody vegetation on the downstream slope of the embankment.



VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Manually remove all trees and woody vegetation in the following pond areas **at least twice a year**.

- From the top and upstream and downstream slopes of the dam
- From inlet and outlet channels
- Within 25 feet of the control structure
- From channels, headwalls, and pipes into the pond area

Do not apply herbicides, fertilizers, or pesticides in or around the pond. If manual removal of invasive weeds has been ineffective, limited applications of aquatic friendly herbicide may be applied by a qualified professional certified by the State of Maryland.



TRASH REMOVAL

Remove trash and debris from all areas in and around the pond **monthly**.

- For wet ponds, any trash in the water should be removed safely by professionals



OTHER PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Perform **as needed**.

- Know the pollutant sources on your property and try to reduce or eliminate the pollutants at the source
- Notify DEP if beaver activity or animal burrowing is observed
- Prevent trees and woody vegetation from growing in these areas
- Seed and cover adjacent areas of bare soil to prevent erosion
- Notify Montgomery County police if graffiti is observed
- Verify all pond safety signs are in place
- Inspect the facility after every major storm and contact DEP if you are concerned



These basic actions will keep your facility working correctly and prevent more serious repairs, which will save you money in the long term.

Maintenance 101 – What and How

Frequently Asked Questions



Q: When does DEP inspect my pond?

A: DEP inspects all above-ground stormwater facilities in Montgomery County for maintenance issues during scheduled inspections every 3 years.



Q: I don't want mosquitoes – how can I avoid having them breed in my pond?

A: Stormwater management ponds typically are not breeding habitats for mosquitoes. Rather, mosquitoes are bred in gutters, pots, or bird baths with standing water. Dunks and mosquitofish are not recommended. The Maryland Department of Agriculture should be contacted for concerns about mosquitoes. Owners must use an approved contractor for any pesticide application. Wet ponds with aquatic habitats maintain natural predators that control mosquito populations. See EPA's guidance for mosquito management: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mosquito



Q: My pond is full of cattails – what should I do?

A: Cattails are an indicator of a possible blocked pipe or high nutrient levels in the water. DEP will only remove cattails if they are blocking the pipe that lets water out of the pond. Please contact DEP if you have additional questions about cattails. Owners can remove vegetation outside the water level of the facility, but not within. Ponds harbor a variety of plants and wildlife that DEP will not disturb unless the pond function becomes impeded (considered structural maintenance).



Q: What if my pond has algae?

A: Managing algae and duckweed are considered aesthetic maintenance and are the responsibility of the owner. See DEP's July 2011 newsletter on our website for additional information on this topic.

Q: Who will fix any issues with my fence or dock?

A: Fences and docks are considered aesthetic maintenance and are the responsibility of the owner. Ponds are not required to have a fence. Owners should not build any structures without the approval of DEP. Owner must follow DEP guidelines for fence installation to ensure proper installation and future access.



Q: Can I stock fish in my pond?

A: Owners must first get approval from the MD Department of Natural Resources before stocking fish in a stormwater pond. In case the pond needs to be drained for maintenance, stocking fish is not recommended.

Q: Can I add a fountain to my pond?

A: Fountains and aerators are the owner's maintenance responsibility. These items require approval and may need an electrical permit from the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) prior to installation.



Q: My pond sign is missing or damaged – who will fix it?

A: Signage is required. DEP will provide the sign, but not the post. Owners are required to install the sign.

Q: Can we swim in the pond?

A: Swimming, skating, wading, and boating are prohibited in stormwater management ponds.

NEED HELP OR HAVE QUESTIONS?

DEP can answer your questions and provide additional guidance about maintaining your stormwater pond.

Email us at AskDEP@montgomerycountymd.gov, call the Montgomery County Customer Service Center at **3-1-1**, or visit our website: montgomerycountymd.gov/stormwater.