



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY • MARYLAND

# How to maintain your Submerged Gravel Wetland

STORMWATER FACILITY MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

## What is a submerged gravel wetland?

A submerged gravel wetland uses wetland plants and soil to remove pollutants from the rainwater. You can find submerged gravel wetlands along parking lots, driveways, and roadways on commercial, industrial, or institutional properties.



Submerged gravel wetlands need regular maintenance, such as:

- **Removing Trash and Debris**
- **Weeding**

## Actions you can take

### Do...

#### Monthly

- ✓ Inspect the facility for erosion, obstructions, or unhealthy vegetation.
- ✓ Remove sediment and debris from areas in and around the submerged gravel wetland. Check for sediment buildup within the gravel layer.
- ✓ Inspect inlet and outlet pipes and channels and remove any blockages.

#### Seasonally

- ✓ Regularly remove weeds and invasive plants.
- ✓ Remove leaves in the fall.

#### As needed

- ✓ Inspect your facility after storms to make sure that rainwater properly drains through the soil and gravel layers.
- ✓ Remove and replace dead and diseased vegetation.
- ✓ Water during initial plant growth (first 18 months) and extreme droughts.
- ✓ Replace clogged gravel with clean gravel and replant the vegetation.
- ✓ Repair eroded areas.

### Don't...

- ✗ Don't use fertilizer or pesticides.
- ✗ Don't apply excess salt and sand that could enter the wetland during winter months.
- ✗ Don't pile snow and ice on top of a submerged gravel wetland.

### Who is responsible for this maintenance?

As the property owner, YOU are responsible for most of the maintenance of your submerged gravel wetland. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will perform maintenance on the soil and piping as needed.

### How will I know if other maintenance is required?

We recommend that you visually check your submerged gravel wetland at least once per year. DEP performs inspections every 3 years. If DEP finds maintenance issues during its inspection, you will receive a notice of violation with a work order that shows a list of items that need to be performed to restore your facility to proper working condition.



**Stormwater management facilities typically are not breeding habitats for mosquitoes. Dunks and mosquito fish are not recommended for submerged gravel wetlands. The Maryland Department of Agriculture should be contacted for concerns about mosquitoes.**

### Why is it important to maintain your submerged gravel wetland?

- An unmaintained submerged gravel wetland may:
- Stop filtering the rainwater and allow pollutants to enter our local streams
  - Become clogged and not allow rainwater to pass
  - Require a complete rehabilitation of the facility, which can be very expensive

By maintaining your submerged gravel wetland, you are doing your part to conserve water and protect your local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

### Can I remove the submerged gravel wetland?

No, you cannot remove any facilities that were part of your building installation—these are permitted structures and DEP maintains a database of these facility locations. DEP may perform a maintenance inspection of your practice if it is a permitted structure. Contact DEP to find out if you have a permitted structure or if you would like to discuss options for modifying your facility.

**You can prolong the life of your submerged gravel wetland system and save on maintenance costs by keeping your site clean and regularly inspecting and maintaining the facility to ensure it is functioning properly.**

### Troubleshooting

Symptom	Possible Cause	Solution
Standing water in the vegetated area	If standing water occurs for over 72 hours, the wetland may be clogged.	The gravel and/or soil may need to be replaced. Contact DEP for assistance. If sediment buildup prevents flow through the wetland, the gravel may need to be replaced.
Erosion	The runoff is moving too fast and/or the vegetation has died.	Stabilize the soil by planting new vegetation. Use rocks if needed to slow the water. Contact the DEP if you observe severe erosion.

### Recommended time frames for typical maintenance

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Removing sediment and debris	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inspecting inlet & outlet pipes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Weeding				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Replanting					---	---	AS	NEEDED	---	---		
Watering (during establishment period)					---	---	AS	NEEDED	---	---		
Replacing gravel					---	---	AS	NEEDED	---	---		
Repairing eroded areas					---	---	AS	NEEDED	---	---		

**NEED HELP OR HAVE QUESTIONS?**  
 DEP can answer your questions and provide additional guidance about maintaining your dry well.  
 Email us at [AskDEP@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:AskDEP@montgomerycountymd.gov), call the Montgomery County Customer Service Center at **3-1-1**, or visit our website: [montgomerycountymd.gov/stormwater](http://montgomerycountymd.gov/stormwater).