



## **PRIVATE WATER QUALITY FACILITY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### ***What is a private water quality facility?***

Water quality facilities are engineered features that remove pollutants from stormwater runoff. They come in many shapes and sizes – from rain gardens to swales, water quality manholes to catch basins. When it rains, stormwater runoff picks up motor oil, pet waste, fertilizers, and other pollutants. Water quality facilities intercept this pollution and remove it from stormwater before it makes its way to our local rivers or into groundwater. In addition, vegetated facilities slow the flow of runoff and allow it to seep into the ground naturally. This preserves the natural water cycle and helps to reduce flooding and erosion.

Water quality facilities fall into two categories, vegetated and structural. In general, stormwater passes through the vegetated facilities, which filter out a variety of pollutants and nutrients. In a structural facility, stormwater pollutants are filtered through materials such as compost or perlite. There are also water quality manholes and catch basins which capture sediment and garbage prior to discharge into either vegetated or structural water quality facilities.

### ***Why is it so important to maintain my water quality facility?***

There are a number of reasons why it is important to maintain your facility. Your water quality facility was designed to remove pollution from stormwater. If your facility isn't maintained properly, the stormwater may not be treated and negative environmental impacts could occur.

If a facility is not properly maintained, you could also end up with localized flooding issues and stagnant water which can create odors and breeding grounds for insects. They can also become a fire hazard.

Ultimately, the goal is to protect the quality of Springfield's groundwater and the McKenzie and Willamette rivers, natural resources which provide drinking water and recreational opportunities. Bottom line: your investment needs proper maintenance to function as designed.

### ***How do I maintain my water quality facility?***

The City of Springfield has educational material that outlines different maintenance techniques, approved native vegetation that can be planted in vegetated facilities, as well as invasive weed fact sheets that assist in the identification and methods of control.<sup>1</sup> Every owner of a private water quality facility will receive an information packet that includes this material.

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<sup>1</sup> Educational materials were adapted from Clean Water Services.

***What am I required to do as an owner of a private water quality facility?***

As an owner, you are responsible for inspecting your facility annually and performing maintenance as outlined in the maintenance checklists.

***What is the intent of the private water quality facility management program?***

The goal of this program is to ensure that facilities function as they were intended. They must be regularly maintained in order to remove pollutants from stormwater and reduce flooding. Proper maintenance ensures that stormwater is treated by the facility, and will not pollute waterways or groundwater. This is especially important in Springfield because the majority of our drinking water comes from groundwater. The City's intent is to make sure facility owners know they have one or more water quality facilities on their property, how to inspect them, and how to maintain them. We will provide educational materials on how to maintain water quality facilities.

***Why is the City of Springfield inspecting private water quality facilities?***

In accordance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, we are required to identify owners of private water quality facilities, develop and implement an inspection program, and distribute educational materials describing maintenance techniques for private water quality facilities.

***What gives the City of Springfield the authority to enter private property to inspect the facilities and where does the City get their authority to enforce?***

The City of Springfield is responsible for ensuring that stormwater runoff from our city is in compliance with water quality standards. Springfield has been under State and Federal regulations for water quality and water protection since 1973. Various sections of the City's Development Code, Municipal Code, and City Council Goals address water quality. The provisions outlined in these various codes authorize Springfield to ensure stormwater being discharged into the public system does not negatively affect water quality.

***What if an owner is reluctant to comply with your request to perform maintenance?***

If you receive a maintenance correction list, develop a plan to correct the deficiencies within the agreed upon time frame. The City will work with each owner to comply with our request. The first step is to educate each property owner on the importance of maintenance and how to maintain the facility. The goal is to achieve voluntary compliance within a negotiated time frame.

***How often can I expect the City of Springfield to inspect my facilities?***

It is your responsibility to inspect your facilities annually and maintain them as needed. City staff may visit your facility approximately once every 3-5 years to inspect and consult with you on the best method of maintenance. We will also send you a letter annually to remind you of your maintenance obligation.