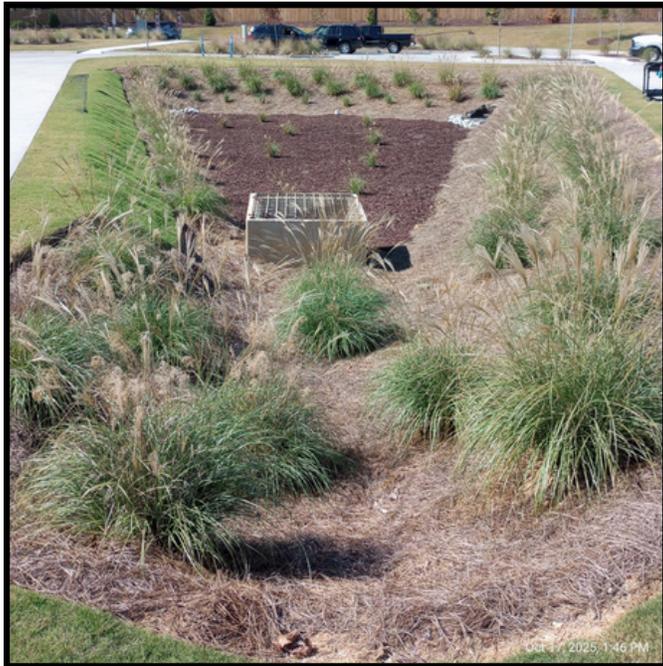


HERE'S THE DIRT

2025
Issue

STORMWATER COMPLIANCE DEPARTMENT - ENGINEERING SERVICES DIVISION

WHAT IS BIORETENTION? - THINK RAIN GARDEN By Wheeler Cowart



Rain gardens, also known as “bioretention basins”, are areas where rainwater is collected and filtered before being reintroduced into the groundwater supply. You may have heard the word “biopond” being tossed around on construction sites lately. So, just what is a biopond, anyway?

The main difference when talking about rain gardens and bioponds comes down to size and complexity. Bioponds are larger and must be engineered to account for the needs of commercial construction. In addition to specific calculations, bioponds are constructed using specialized materials and techniques, such as drainage systems and amended soils. This usually requires training and heavy equipment. While a rain garden may be built in a day, bioponds usually take longer and are often installed in several stages throughout construction. Regular stormwater ponds are designed to collect and hold stormwater runoff and release it slowly into a nearby stream with little to no treatment, whereas bioponds and rain gardens offer treatment by holding rainwater which slowly soaks into the ground and/or is absorbed by plants.

Bioponds act as a treatment system for stormwater runoff, which is very important in urbanized communities where the potential for pollution is everywhere. An easier way to think of this is to picture the rain gardens that are commonly seen in residential landscapes. So, when you hear an inspector, engineer, or contractor talking about bioponds or bioretention, picture a large rain garden and you’ll be on the right track.



INITIAL INSPECTION FOR LAND DISTURBANCE

By Jody Hilley

A successful initial inspection is a required first step before land disturbance and/or building activities can take place on any project. Before an initial inspection takes place, the following project items need to be completed:

- Obtain all necessary permits related to the project.
- All project plans must be submitted and approved.

Before scheduling your initial inspection, ensure that the following on-site requirements, specified by Columbia County, are met:

1. All permit placards must be posted in a protected, visible location on the job site.
2. All initial BMPs must be installed on site per approved plan such as but not limited to:
 - a. Concrete washout bag (Cw)
 - b. Sediment Barriers (Sd1)
 - c. Construction exit (Co)

COLUMBIA COUNTY STORMWATER COMPLIANCE DEPARTMENT
MINOR LAND DISTURBANCE PERMIT

COUNTY INSPECTOR: _____

PROJECT INFORMATION

• PROJECT NAME: _____

• STRUCTURE: _____

• DISTURBED AREA: _____

• INITIAL INSPECTION PASSED: Y N
DATE: _____

• ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS 200 FEET OF SITE: Y N

• NOTICE OF INTENT FILED: Y N NA
DATE: _____

PERMITTEE INFORMATION

• OWNER: _____

• OPERATOR: _____

• 24 HOUR CONTACT: _____

• PHONE: _____

NOTICE OF VIOLATION #1: _____

NOTICE OF VIOLATION #2: _____

(NOTE: ALL SUBSEQUENT VIOLATIONS WILL RESULT IN STOP WORK ORDER)

For any complaints about this site, please call 3-1-1



***IMPORTANT NOTE: THE INITIAL INSPECTION MUST “PASS” BEFORE THE FOOTING INSPECTION THROUGH THE BUILDING STANDARDS DEPARTMENT CAN BE SCHEDULED.**

NOTICE OF TERMINATION INSPECTION

By Heather Lewis

Now that your construction project is complete, there is one final step before your Land Disturbance Permit (LDP) can be closed out: the Notice of Termination (NOT) inspection. This inspection lets the County and/or the State know that the land disturbance activity is complete. It is also necessary to get your certificate of occupancy (CO).

NOT INSPECTION CHECKLIST

1

Stabilize Site

A site should have '100% coverage with 70% density' of permanent vegetation such as perennial grasses, trees, shrubs, etc. Two commonly used types of permanent vegetation are Bermuda and Centipede grasses.

2

Remove All Temporary Best Management Practices (BMPs)

This includes silt fence, inlet protection such as wattles, skimmers, filter rings, and any other temporary sediment barriers or protections.

3

Remove All Construction-Related Debris and Equipment

This includes excess construction materials, dumpsters, concrete washout stations, portable toilets, etc.

4

Ensure All Stormwater Infrastructure Is Installed Per Engineered Plan

This may include inspecting ponds, swales, ditches, inlets, outfalls, etc to verify their placement as well as function.

EVERY LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT WITH AN LDP REQUIRES A NOT INSPECTION BEFORE THE PROJECT CAN BE COMPLETED AND THE PERMIT CLOSED OUT IN OUR SYSTEM.

TO REQUEST A NOT INSPECTION

- Email LDP@columbiacountyga.gov or call (706)447-7645 with project address and requested inspection date
- Email end of project documents (if applicable) such as:
 - Secondary permittees
 - Completed Secondary Addendum Form
 - Primary & Tertiary permittees
 - Proof of NOT submittal in the Georgia EPD Online System (GEOS)

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE (BMP) FEATURE SEDIMENT BARRIER: MULCH BERM

Sd1

By Hunter Martenn

When builders see the “Sd1” label on a plan, they tend to think silt fence. According to the *Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia*, commonly known as the Green Book, it means “sediment barrier.” They come in a variety; silt fence, brush barriers, compost filter socks, and mulch berms. With these choices, it creates the question, “what is the most effective?” The Auburn University Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering partnered with the Nebraska Department of Transportation to answer that. See below data comparison from the case study.



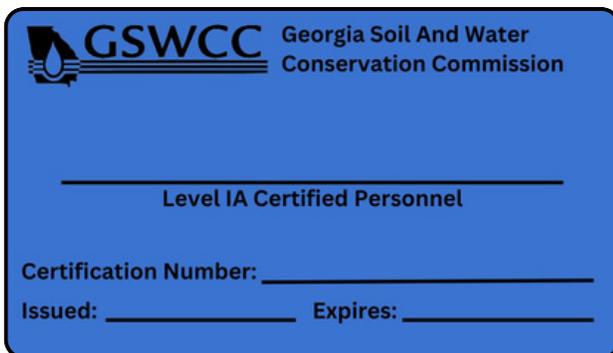
SILT FENCE

- Captures about 82% of sediment
- Costs about \$5 per linear foot
- Must be removed after construction



MULCH BERM

- Captures about 98% of sediment
- Costs about \$3 per linear foot if mulch is sourced onsite
- Can be repurposed on site after construction



**Need Initial Blue Card Training
or Recertification?**

**Email Rachael Osborne
for more information on
upcoming courses at
rosborne@columbiacountyga.gov**

2025 Land Disturbance Permit in Review:

Permits Issued: 774

Inspections Performed: 18,690

QUESTIONS?

**MAIN PHONE: 706-447-7645 (SOIL LINE)
MAIN EMAIL: LDP@COLUMBIACOUNTYGA.GOV**