Glossary of Stormwater Terms

X-year storm	*Rainfall is generally characterized by its size, intensity, and frequency of occurrence. The size of a rain storm is the total precipitation that occurs over a particular duration. (See depth, duration, frequency table excerpt from NOAA for rainfall depth estimates.) Because storm events are random and characterizing associated rainfall amounts is based on statistics, there is no guarantee that storms will occur on those fixed intervals. For example, a 10-year storm can happen in consecutive years, etc.*
1-year storm	A rainfall of certain duration that occurs, on average, once every year is called a 1-year storm and has a 100% probability of occurring in a given year.
2-year storm	A rainfall of certain duration that occurs, on average, once every two years is called a 2-year storm and has a 50% probability of occurring in a given year.
10-year storm	A rainfall of certain duration that occurs, on average, once every ten years is called a 10-year storm and has a 10% probability of occurring in a given year.
25-year storm	A rainfall of certain duration that occurs, on average, once every 25 years is called a 25-year storm and has a 4% probability of occurring in a given year.
100-year storm	A rainfall of certain duration that occurs, on average, once every 100 years is called a 100-year storm and has a 1% probability of occurring in a given year.
100-year floodplain	The flood water elevation resulting from a flood event that has a 1% probability of occurring in a given year. Any lands within the reach of a 100-year flood is said to be the 100-year floodplain.
Berm	A barrier constructed of compacted soil that is generally intended to restrict or direct the flow of water.
Bioretention area	A mulched or grassed area designed to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff through infiltration. There is typically no maintained permanent pool of water in a bioretention area.
BMP	Best Management Practice; See also SCM. The term “BMP” has been globally replaced with “SCM” (Stormwater Control Measure) in accordance with new State terminology.
Buffer	A vegetated area between a water body and adjacent land uses. Buffers are designed to provide soil stability, slow the flow of runoff, and improve water quality by filtering out pollutants.
Catch basin	Curbside opening that collects stormwater from streets and serves as an entry point to the storm drain system.
CFS	Cubic feet per second; a measure of flow rate.

Channel A feature that conveys surface water and is open to the air.

Conveyance The process of moving water from one place to another.

Culvert Pipe or concrete box structure which drains open channels, swales, or ditches under a roadway.

Detention Temporarily collecting and holding stormwater runoff while slowly draining to another location.

Diffuse flow Water flow over a surface at a uniform depth; sheet flow. Usually depth is low and spread out which generally reduces erosive forces.

Dry pond A BMP that is dry until a rain event when it temporarily stores incoming stormwater, traps suspended pollutants, and reduces the peak discharge.

Easement A right to cross or otherwise use the real property of another owner for a specific purpose.

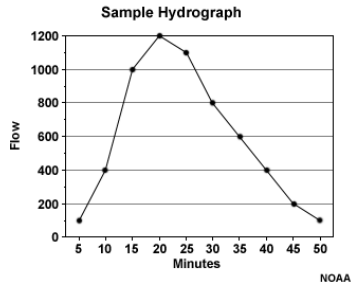
FES Flared end section; the outlet section or discharge point of a pipe. An FES is found where a flow transitions from piped flow to overland flow.

First flush The initial surface runoff of a storm event, usually containing more pollutants compared to runoff later in the storm.

Grading The cutting and/or filling of the land surface to a desired slope or elevation.

Groundwater Water held underground in the soil or in pores and rock crevices. Stormwater runoff can infiltrate in pervious surfaces and recharge groundwater.

Hydrograph A graphical representation of water flow rate as a function of time.



Impervious Any surface or groundcover that has limited or no capacity to absorb or infiltrate water.

Infiltration The process of water moving down through the soil from the soil surface.

Invert The lowest point in a pipe where water is designed to flow out.

Level spreader A concrete level lip designed to provide diffuse flow from a roadway or a BMP outlet.

LID Low Impact Development; an innovative stormwater management approach with a basic principle that tries to mimic nature by encouraging infiltration.

NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; federal agency focused on the conditions of the oceans and the atmosphere. They maintain records and produce daily weather forecasts, issue severe storm warnings, and monitor climate.
Nuisance flooding	Flooding which causes public inconvenience, but little or no property damage.
Outfall	The point where stormwater runoff exits a drainage system and discharges into a receiving water body.
Peak flow rate	The maximum flow of water during a storm event, usually expressed in CFS (cubic feet per second).
Pervious	Any surface or groundcover that allows water to pass through or infiltrate.
Receiving water	Any water body that receives stormwater outflow.
Retention	Collecting and holding stormwater runoff indefinitely (e.g. wet pond).
Retrofit	The modification of stormwater management systems through the construction and/or enhancement of BMPs designed to improve water quality.
Riparian	Relating to or adjacent to the banks of a river.
Runoff	Excess rainfall that does not infiltrate and instead flows over the surface of the land.
SCM	Stormwater Control Measure; Physical structures requiring engineering design and engineered construction to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff. They also provide flood control, reduce downstream erosion, and promote groundwater recharge. The most common examples include bioretention cells, wet ponds, and stormwater wetlands.
Sheet flow	Water flow over a surface at a uniform depth; diffuse flow. Usually depth is low and spread out which generally reduces erosive forces.
Stream restoration	The process of repairing creeks damaged by erosion. The primary goals are improved water quality, stable banks, and enhanced habitat for aquatic life and wildlife.
Stormwater	Water that originates during precipitation events and during snow/ice melts. Stormwater can infiltrate into the soil, evaporate into the air, or runoff into nearby surface waters.
Stormwater wetlands	Constructed systems that mimic the functions of natural wetlands and use physical, chemical, and biological processes to treat stormwater pollution.
Surface water	Water found on the surface of the earth such as a river, stream, lake, wetland, or ocean.
Swale	A broad, shallow, gently sloped channel that conveys stormwater runoff.
Tributary	A river, stream, or creek flowing into a larger river or lake.

USGS	United States Geological Survey; a science organization that provides impartial information on the health of ecosystems and the environment. They collect, monitor, analyze, and provide scientific understanding about natural conditions and issues.
Wet pond	A BMP that maintains (retains) a permanent pool of water for removing pollutants and has additional capacity above the permanent pool for reducing the peak discharge.