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quick facts on...

Statewide Unified Stormwater Rule

JANUARY 2009

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.

Our Mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems, and water supply.

To protect Florida's surface waters from the effects of excessive nutrients in stormwater runoff, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Florida's five water management districts are working to create a statewide unified stormwater rule that will be implemented through the existing Environmental Resource Permit program.

Why the Rule is Needed

As stormwater runoff flows across landscapes, it can carry the nutrients phosphorus and nitrogen into rivers, lakes, canals and other water bodies, with the potential for negative impacts to water quality. Excessive amounts of these nutrients promote an overgrowth of algae and exotic plant life, altering habitats and water quality that Florida's native plants and animals need to thrive.

The rule proposes that new construction activities must reduce the amount of total phosphorus (TP) and total nitrogen (TN) in stormwater runoff by using treatment options available in a selection of "green" technologies and best management practices.

This will promote long-term improvements in water quality among water bodies throughout Florida, particularly those that currently do not meet state water quality standards. In addition, establishing a standardized set of criteria will eliminate inconsistencies between the stormwater rules used by each of Florida's five water management districts.

Separate criteria are being created for stormwater retrofit projects and urban redevelopment projects.

What the Rule Includes

The statewide unified stormwater rule proposes to require that post-construction nutrient loads must be less than or equal to pre-construction nutrient loads, where "pre-construction" is defined as an unimproved/natural condition. Regional differences in rainfall and soil conditions will be taken into consideration.

The stormwater rule offers a series of best management practices, plus design and construction choices, that can be combined to create the best stormwater treatment options for each project. Linking a series of these options together forms a "treatment train," which removes additional nutrients as stormwater runoff travels through each link in the series.

Treatment Train options include:

Best Management Practices

- Retention/exfiltration
- Wet detention
- Stormwater reuse

Low-Impact Design Technologies

- Green/vegetated roofs and cistern systems
- Pervious pavements
- Bio-filtration

Other Benefits

Effective use of the “treatment train” in project design may reduce or eliminate the need to enlarge water detention areas on sites. It also may reduce the volume of runoff discharged from the site, recharging groundwater and reducing downstream flood impacts.

Complying with the statewide rule criteria should help address the requirements for new construction associated with Florida’s Total Maximum Daily Load Basin Management Action Plans. These plans are designed to help restore Florida’s impaired waterways.

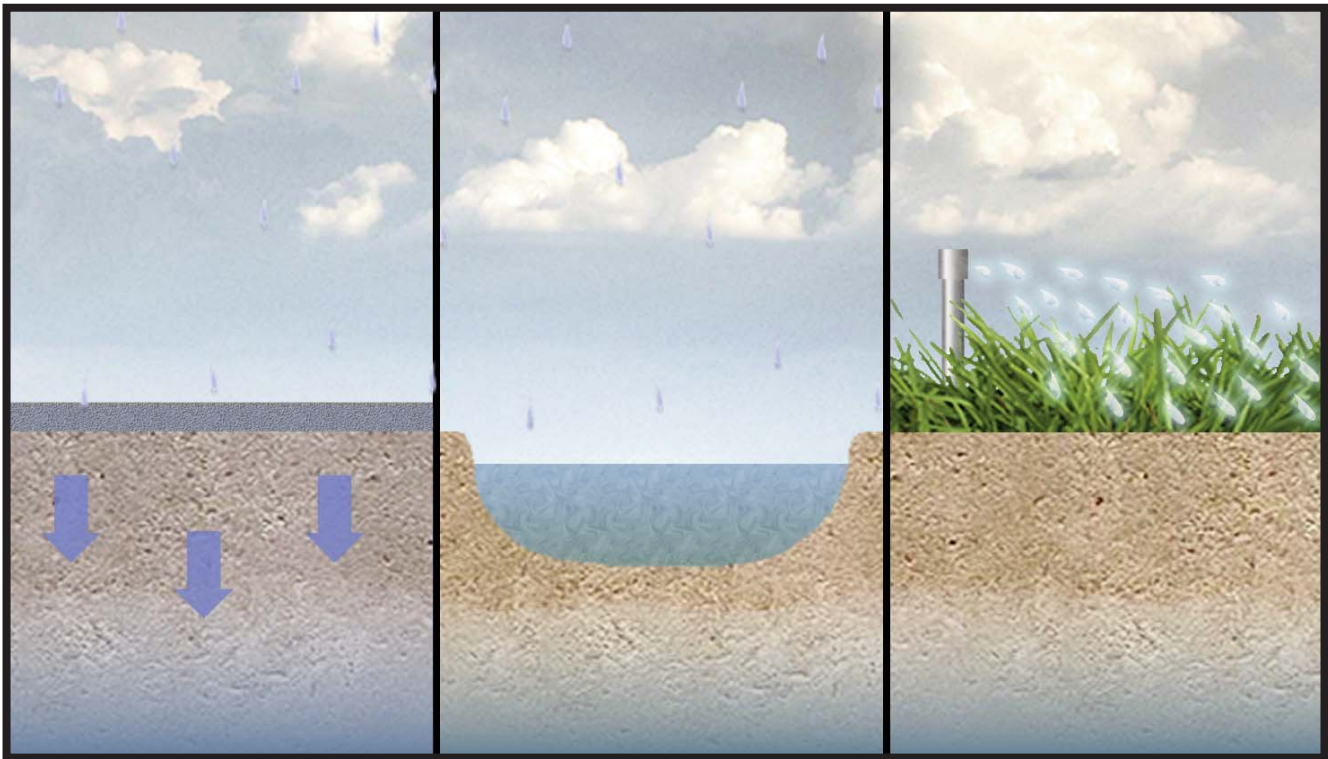
Additionally, local governments can implement more stringent requirements for new development in accordance with their authority.

When the Rule Will Go Into Effect

A Technical Advisory Committee has been meeting since March 2008 to provide input on the proposed rule. Technical review will continue in 2009. Public workshops will be scheduled after the advisory committee finishes its work. The rule is anticipated to be adopted in mid to late 2010.

Treatment Train

A series of different best management practices linked together forms a stormwater runoff treatment train. Additional nutrients are removed as stormwater passes through each section. The treatment train may also reduce the volume of runoff discharged from a site, improving groundwater recharge and reducing downstream flood impacts.



Rainfall passes through pervious pavement and is absorbed by the ground.

At the same time, rainfall and runoff collect in a stormwater treatment pond that reduces nutrients and recharges groundwater.

Water from the stormwater treatment pond is then recycled through irrigation.



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