ENHANCING RETENTION PONDS

Landscaping & beautifying existing retention ponds

FACT SHEET

Retention ponds (a.k.a. wet detention ponds) provide both water quality and water quantity benefits. In terms of water quantity, retention ponds maintain a permanent pool of water, but also temporarily store stormwater runoff from streets, parking lots, and other hard surfaces, before slowly releasing it into streams and other receiving waterways.

In terms of water quality, retention ponds play an important role by allowing settling and removal of pollutants contained in stormwater runoff such as sediment, nutrients, bacteria, toxins, grease, oil, and heavy metals.

However, many retention ponds can be improved both functionally and aesthetically to improve water quality and serve as an amenity in a subdivision or place of business. Enhancing a retention pond, by planting the right plant in the right place, can achieve this. Plants are important for helping to filter and remove pollutants and they can also provide habitat.

Both the City of Wilmington and the State of North Carolina Division of Water Quality (DWQ) have standards for installing, landscaping, and maintaining a retention pond. Depending on location, your pond may have a permit from the City, the State, or from both agencies. ***In either case, be sure to follow the simple guidelines listed below and/or contact your local permitting agency for more information*** *(see reverse)*.

To enhance an existing retention pond, be sure that any new plantings or landscaping is done in accordance with the permitting standards for your retention pond and:

- Any new landscaping should not impede runoff entering or leaving the pond. *(i.e. outlets or passageways, including the emergency spillway, should not be blocked or obstructed in any way).*
- The new landscaping should not encroach on the existing maintenance access. This access is necessary for maintaining the banks, slope, vegetated shelf, outlet structures, landscaping, etc. *(Consult your permitted retention pond plan if you are unsure where the maintenance access is located.)*
- Current guidelines recommend that grass be planted on pond slopes.....
- Any sediment introduced into the pond as a result of installing vegetation or maintaining landscaping should be removed immediately.
- New landscaping should not create impervious surface area.
- Landscaping should be maintained appropriately.

QUESTIONS?

CITY OF WILMINGTON
Benjamin Adei, EI
Staff Engineer / Plan Review
341-5818
Ben.Adei@wilmingtonnc.gov

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
Linda Lewis, Engineer II
DWQ Surface Water Protection Section
796-7215
Linda.Lewis@ncmail.net

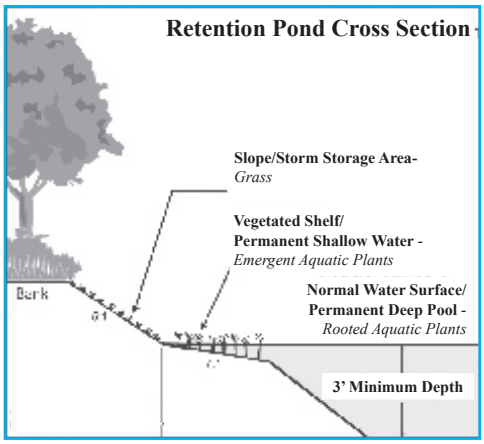
Stormwater Detention Ponds, section 5-49:
http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/Portals/0/standards.pdf

Wet Detention Basins, 3-41 to 3-64:
http://h2o.enr.state.nc.us/su/documents/NCDENRBMPManualFINAL_July2005_appendices_000.pdf

Stormwater Fact:
Useful, Beautiful Ponds

Stormwater retention ponds can be designed to clean water and be beautiful too. Landscaping and regular maintenance can make these man-made ponds an asset for everyone. Stormwater pollution is less of a problem when a beautiful, functioning pond is part of the solution.

Florida Lake Management Society



PLANTS FOR RETENTION PONDS
For suggestions for suitable plants for retention ponds in Southeastern NC, visit:
http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/Portals/_default/stormwater/cguide.pdf *(pages 39-43)*

INVASIVE, AQUATIC PLANTS
For information about noxious, invasive aquatic plants, visit:
http://www.ncwildflower.org/invasives/invasives.htm or
http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/seagrant/ncinv.html

FOR PLANT HELP
Contact the Master Gardener Plant Clinic or Hotline
NHC Cooperative Extension / 6206 Oleander Drive
798-7665 / http://newhanover.ces.ncsu.edu/