

## Natural Infiltration

### Description

Natural infiltration is a method in which an undisturbed land area covered with natural vegetation accepts runoff from new development and infiltrates the runoff into the soil.

### When and Where to Use It

Use natural infiltration areas only where the soils are suitable. The area is typically in a forested condition with the land surface covered by leaves, pine needles, and other forest floor organic materials. Natural infiltration areas are designated for passive recreation only.

### Design Criteria

Use a natural infiltration area as a storm water quality control if it meets the design criteria of this section. The size of a natural infiltration area is calculated using the following equation:

$$A = \frac{(K T I)}{[(cd) - K]}$$

Where:

- A** = Natural infiltration area required (acres)
- K** = Runoff volume to infiltrate (inches)
- T** = Total site area or total drainage area (acres)
- I** = Built upon area ratio (Built upon area / T)
- c** = Effective water capacity (in/in), should be determined from site-specific soil samples.
- d** = Depth of soil A horizon (inches), should be determined from site-specific soil samples.

Runoff enters the infiltration area as sheet flow with a non-erosive velocity. Stabilize and vegetate the areas draining to the Natural Infiltration area a minimum of 20-feet in length.

Natural infiltration areas have the following characteristics:

- Appropriate soils that have a minimum infiltration rate of 0.3-inches per hour, low erosion potential, and good drainage (not in a wetland or floodplain).
- Mature forest cover (if the natural infiltration area (A) is not located in a mature forest, then double the area of that calculated by the equation above).
- Slopes less than 10 percent.
- Remains permanently undisturbed.

The limitations of natural infiltration areas include:

- Not suitable for soils that have greater than 30 percent clay content or greater than 40 percent clay and silt content.
- Not suitable in areas with high water tables or shallow depth to highly impervious strata such as bedrock or clay layers.
- High sediment loadings or lack of maintenance clogs the surface layer therefore inhibiting any water infiltration into the soil.