

## MANAGER'S CORNER

# Budgeting for Storm Water Facility Maintenance

Storm water management facilities can be large budget items. To properly budget for such facilities, you must know what type of facility your association has, so that you can estimate current operating and future replacement expenditures.

Three categories of expenses exist for most storm water management facilities: Inspection costs, routine maintenance costs, and long-term replacement costs.

## INSPECTION COSTS

- Routine — Association maintenance personnel, the community manager, or qualified volunteers should perform regular inspections for obvious problems; the cost should be minimal.
- Professional — A professional in the natural resources management field should perform a thorough inspection no less than once every three years; costs will vary depending on your type of facility.

## ROUTINE MAINTENANCE COSTS

- Trash Removal — All facilities require trash removal whether above ground or underground; cost should be based on maintenance personnel or contractor charges.
- Lawn and Landscape Maintenance — Dry and wet ponds require lawn and landscape maintenance including grass cutting, bank plantings, aquatic or semi-aquatic vegetation; costs should be based on contractor estimates for existing conditions and the level of service the Board of Directors elects. (Some owners were led to believe they bought a waterfront home, so lawn maintenance around ponds can be more extensive.)
- Insect and Animal Control — Dry and wet ponds may require insect and animal control, (check with local governments to see if they have free programs or any restrictions on insect spraying); cost estimates should be obtained from an exterminator and/or trapping company.
- Water Quality Control — Wet ponds may require algae treatment with

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herbicides; costs should be obtained from a local contractor.

- Other Equipment Maintenance — Wet ponds may contain fountains, aerator, etc. or be surrounded by fencing. (Fencing may be around dry ponds, as well.) Maintenance costs on fountain or aerator pumps and other equipment should be considered, in addition to routine minor repairs to fencing.
- Cleaning of Sediment Filter — Infiltration trenches have sediment filters that may require cleaning several times each year, (determined by inspection). Once your facility's needs are determined, a contractor should supply you with a cost to perform this service regularly.
- Emptying of Storage Chambers — Oil grit separators (usually at commercial sites) contain storage chambers where filtered material accumulates; a contractor can supply costs for emptying the chamber, as needed.

## LONG-TERM REPLACEMENTS COSTS

The cost involved with each of the following items should be determined by a professional and included in your association's reserve budget.

- Dredging and Sediment Removal Costs — Take into account pond access and resulting common area damage when dredging is performed.
- Equipment Costs
- Permit Costs (if needed)
- Sediment Volume
- Sediment Disposal
- Equipment Replacement (if applicable) — fences, aerators, pumps, etc.

- Structural Replacement- towers, piping, trash racks, etc.

A long-term replacement plan should be developed which considers all of the expense categories listed above. Several other general budget categories can be affected by the presence of a storm water facility in an association. Be sure to consider any additional liability insurance costs and signs, as well as capital improvement projects to upgrade the facility's aesthetics.

Storm water management facilities can be costly over the long-term if not properly managed. Through proper maintenance and budgeting, you can maximize the life span of a facility and minimize its impact on your budget. ■

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