

# Chesapeake Bay Watershed, Stormwater, and Environmental Justice

Baltimore, MD

October 26, 2010



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



# What is Environmental Justice?

*Environmental Justice* is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.



*...everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, work.*

# The Clean Water Act: *The Objective*

*“to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters.”*



Photo Credit [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)

# The Clean Water Act: *The Goals*

- Eliminating the discharge of pollutants into navigable waters; and
- Achieving interim water quality that will protect fish, shellfish, and wildlife while providing for recreation (“fishable and swimmable”) in and on the water whenever attainable.

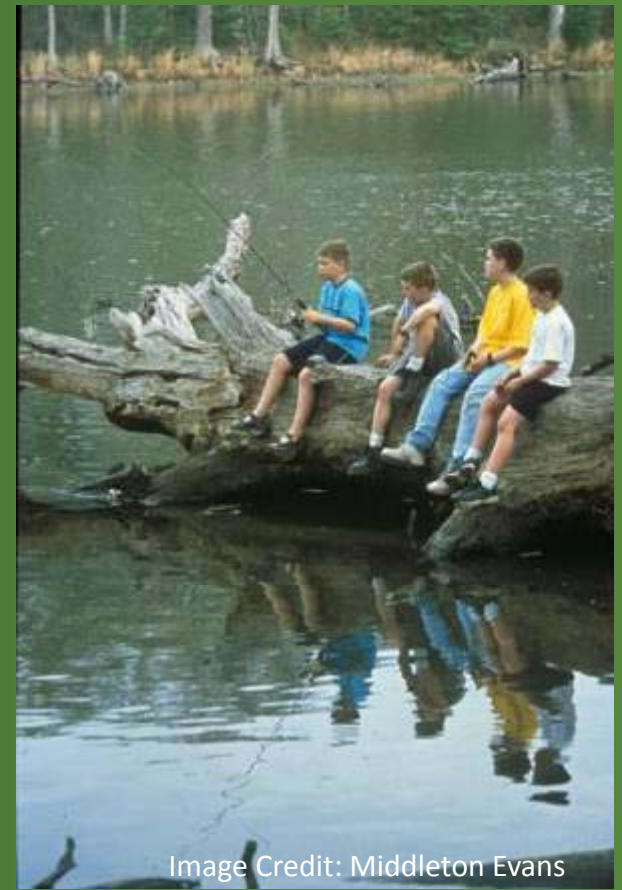


Image Credit: Middleton Evans

## **The Clean Water Act:** *The Tools*

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting program authorizes and regulates certain discharges (§ 402), including stormwater discharges.

# Background

- On December 28, 2009, EPA issued a Federal Register Notice announcing a national rulemaking to establish a program to reduce stormwater discharges from new development and redevelopment and make other regulatory improvements to strengthen its stormwater program.
- One of the preliminary considerations included exploring specific stormwater provisions to protect sensitive areas.

# Purpose of Today's Discussion

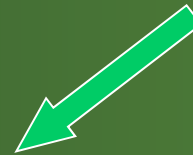
- Today's discussion will focus on:
  - EPA's preliminary considerations for stormwater requirements within the Chesapeake Bay watershed;
  - Concerns you have regarding stormwater management in your community;
  - Ways EPA can better help your community achieve its stormwater goals; and
  - Tools and resources that your community needs to successfully manage stormwater.

# Stormwater Challenges

1. Increased amounts of stormwater and pollutants...



2. Enter the municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) or a nearby waterbody...



3. Which can lead to stream degradation and increased pollutants entering waterbodies





# Why is stormwater a problem?

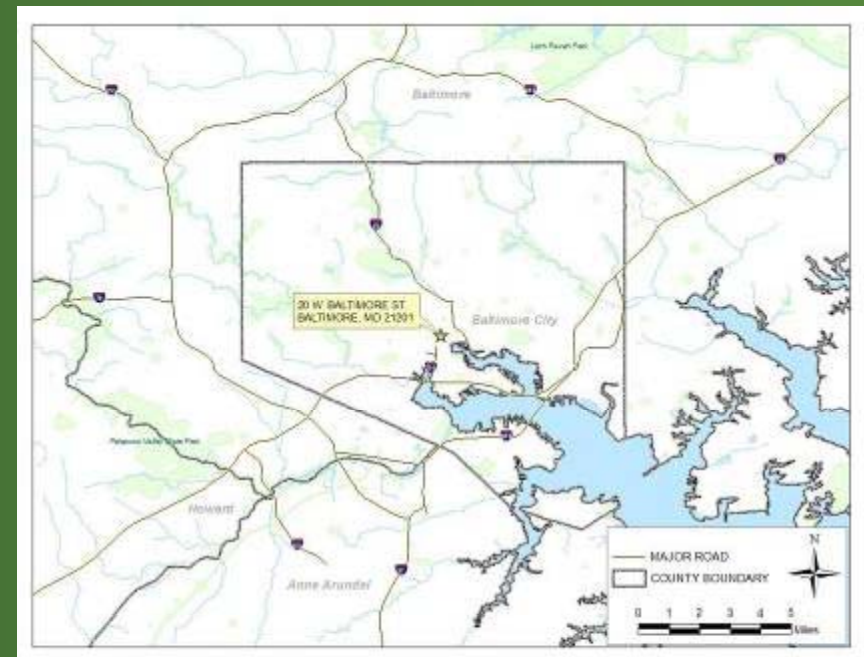
- Increased stormwater volume can cause flooding, scouring and sewer overflows.
- Stormwater pollutants:
  - Cause beach closures and swimming illnesses through bacterial contamination
  - Include trash in the Baltimore harbor
  - Impact fisheries through excess:
    - Sedimentation (smothering fish eggs),
    - Nutrients (reducing available dissolved oxygen)
    - Metals (posing a health risk to people who eat the fish)
    - Temperature (affecting cold-water fish and other biota)
- Stormwater pollutants can also increase the costs of treating drinking water supplies



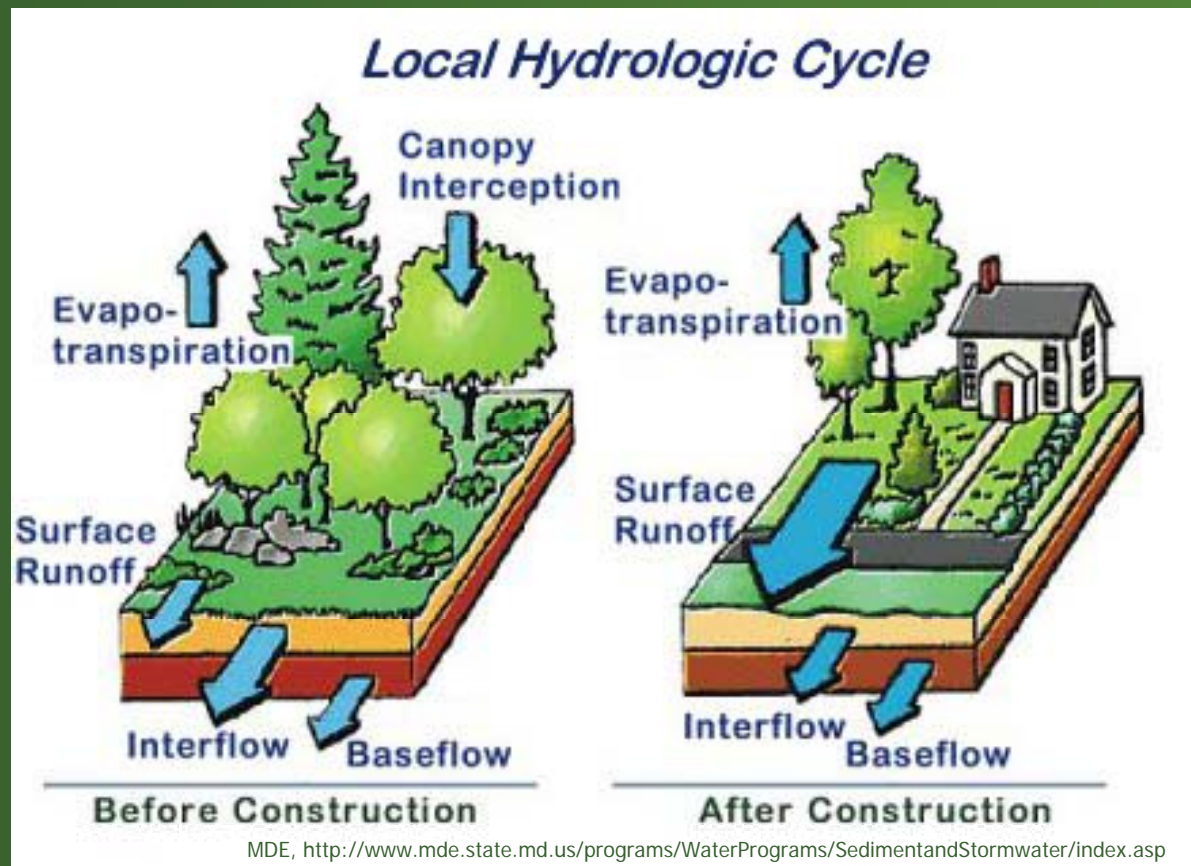
# Baltimore's Stormwater Challenges

Baltimore's harbor and rivers are impaired for a variety of pollutants from many sources, including stormwater:

- Patapsco River Lower North Branch is impaired for phosphorus, sediment, PCBs, fecal bacteria
  - Jones Falls watershed is impaired for sediment
- Baltimore harbor is impaired for trash, PCBs, and nutrients
- Baltimore City's impervious cover = 45.1%



# Alteration of Hydrologic Cycle



*All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was.*

*- Toni Morrison*

# The Chesapeake Bay Watershed

- Over 64,000 square miles of land drain into the Chesapeake Bay or its tributaries
- Major urban areas include:
  - Baltimore, MD
  - Harrisburg, PA
  - DC
  - Annapolis, MD
  - Richmond, VA
  - Hampton Roads, VA (Norfolk-Virginia Beach)



# Stormwater Management

*Then...*



*~AND~*



*Now*

# Direct Conveyance to Surface Waters



# Big Basins



## Era of the Big Basin

Stormwater management designs that manage only discharge rates often exacerbate the problem.

Natural systems respond to runoff volumes, frequencies, durations and temperatures as well.





## Paradigm Shift:

*Moving away from the curb and gutter,  
big basin approach*

- Shift from the concept of moving stormwater as far away as quickly as possible in large, buried collection and conveyance systems.



- Shift towards the concept of managing stormwater the way mother nature would do it: where it falls; plants & soils.

# Green Infrastructure Approaches Mimic Natural Hydrologic Site Conditions

## Infiltration - Evapotranspiration - Capture & Use



- Protecting areas with natural ecological functions
- Amended soils
- Impervious cover removal
- Bioretention
- Permeable pavements
- Green roofs
- Cisterns & rain barrels
- Trees & expanded tree boxes
- Reforestation & restoration
- Infill & Redevelopment
- Parking & street designs
- Water Conservation

# Bioinfiltration



# Vegetated Swales



# Parking Lot Infiltration Areas



# Rain Gardens



# Curb Extensions



# Planters





# Permeable and Porous Pavements



# Green Roofs



# Green Walls



# Pocket Wetlands



# Vegetated Buffers & Landscaping



# Rainwater Harvesting & Use



# Green Infrastructure Benefits

- Cleaner water
- Stable hydrology/baseflow maintenance
- Reduced flooding
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Cleaner air
- Reduced urban temperatures
- Jobs creation
- Water supply
- Energy savings
- Cost savings
- Habitat protection
- Community benefits: recreation, public health

# Tree & Canopy Programs

- Trees intercept, and evapotranspire significant amounts of water
- Trees filter pollutants
- Canopies shade and cool paved surfaces
- Watershed 263 in Baltimore created a long-term project to educate, sustain, and improve water quality in the city
  - 800 trees planted
  - Restored schoolyards, vacant lots, landscaped major streets
  - Monitoring of storm drains





# Green Infrastructure Costs

- Prince George's County Subdivision built with half LID, half tradition stormwater measures saw significant savings from LID

Conventional Development Cost	Somerset LID Cost	Cost Savings	Percent Savings	Savings per Lot
\$2,456,843	\$1,671,461	\$785,382	32%	\$4,000

- Seattle, WA project redesigned a city block utilizing LID techniques

Item	Conventional Development Cost	SEA Street Cost	Cost Savings*	Percent Savings*	Percent of Total Savings*
Site preparation	\$65,084	\$88,173	-\$23,089	-35%	-11%
Stormwater management	\$372,988	\$264,212	\$108,776	29%	50%
Site paving and sidewalks	\$287,646	\$147,368	\$140,278	49%	65%
Landscaping	\$78,729	\$113,034	-\$34,305	-44%	-16%
Misc. (mobilization, etc.)	\$64,356	\$38,761	\$25,595	40%	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$868,803</b>	<b>\$651,548</b>	<b>\$217,255</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>

# Summary

- Stormwater can have a significant impact on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries if not managed properly.
- The good news: There are a lot of options to improve stormwater management within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- Changes to the stormwater regulations will strengthen programs.

## Feedback

- What do you see as effective and ineffective strategies for managing stormwater in your community?
- How can the federal government be a more effective partner in helping to manage stormwater in your community?
- What additional tools and resources would help your efforts to successfully address the impact of stormwater in your community?