

# Best Management Practices



In the interest of brevity, they call them BMPs. But what are they?

WID thinks they are anything which improves water quality—*practices, programs, projects, plans, policies*. Most often they are things that people build or activities that people do. After devoting six years developing an EPA grant assignment to identify and demonstrate urban best management practices, WID gives top rating to BMPs which achieve an actual and practical environmental goal. For example, using several BMPs, including *check dams* and *flow regulators*, the intermittent eroding and flood-prone stream in JEB Stuart Park was converted into a more peaceful storm response which eliminated flooding and greatly reduced soil erosion. A larger example is the newly completed Potterton debris diversion trap which will remove floatable pollution before it reaches the lake.

Tomorrow's assignment is to retrofit the rest of the Barcroft area and even reach upstream to install beneficial BMPs in the entire watershed. This involves improving other small subwatersheds with BMPs and adopting new beneficial practices such as street sweeping to keep roadside filth out of Fairfax County water-bodies. It also depends on help provided by the County's *Department of Public Works and Environmental Services* which enforces local pollution control ordinances, introduces watershed coordination systems and maintains existing facilities. WID can contribute toward achievement of the total effort by installing, monitoring and operating new BMPs which tend to restore a natural environmental balance. Immediate objectives include organizing a comprehensive street sweeping program to houseclean urban neighborhoods and continued dredging and lake aeration to remove pollution.