Biochar in Stormwater Best Management Practices: Center for Watershed Protection/American Biochar Institute Issue Guidance



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The Center for Watershed Protection and American Biochar Institute (collectively, "CWP") have issued a set of guidance materials titled:

Biochar in Stormwater Best Management Practices ("Guidance").

CWP states that the Guidance was developed to support the broader use of biochar in stormwater filtration and green infrastructure best management practices ("BMPs").

Cited is current research and implementation in stormwater management. The objective is stated to assist stormwater designers and agencies successfully incorporate biochar into BMPs for their regional stormwater management goals.

Biochar has been defined as a stabilized carbon product made from various biomass sources via pyrolysis through a high-temperature, low-oxygen process.

Biomass waste can include:

- Wood or agricultural waste.
- Paper mill waste.
- Other biological residue.

The Guidance states that biochar amendments in BMPs may increase:

- Pollutant removal.
- Runoff detention and infiltration.
- BMP plant survivability.

Nevertheless, it is noted that biochar characteristics and how it is used in BMPs impact how biochar affects BMP performance.

Identified as key components of the Guidance:

- Background on biochar and potential benefits to stormwater management.
- Different biochar materials and target characteristics for specific stormwater management goals, BMP design, and regional eco-sensitivities.
- Recommended testing requirements for biochar producers, suppliers, and installers.
- Design recommendations for incorporating biochar into eight (8) common stormwater BMPs.
- Recommendations for sourcing, delivery, and storage of biochar and biochar amended materials.

- Specification templates for biochar material and handling, and supplemental specifications for incorporating biochar into existing regional BMP designs.

The target users of the Guidance are practitioners that work with stormwater BMP design, implementation, and program management. Further, it is recommended that those using the guidebook already understand local/regional stormwater BMP design goals and eco-sensitivities. In addition, an understanding is recommended of site-specific needs, objectives, and stormwater regulations.

The Guidance states as a caveat that it should not be used in place of regional stormwater management regulation or guidance, but instead to provide opportunities to enhance BMP functions through the addition of biochar into regional stormwater practices.

A copy of the Guidance can be found here.