



Buzzards Bay Project
National Estuary Program

Eric McLaughlin, Chairman
Falmouth Conservation Commission
59 Town Hall Square
Falmouth, MA 02540

August 27, 2004

RE: stormwater inlet protection strategies

Mr. McLaughlin:

On August 25, at the Buzzards Bay Project's RDA hearing for the Department of Public Works (DPW) roadwork on Gifford Street, Town Engineer Gaetano G. Calise, Jr. stated that flooding problems on Gifford Street were unavoidable because of the heavy rains that week. We disagree.

Some of the recent wetland impacts on Gifford Street in front of Sols Pond resulted in part because of the accumulation of water on the street because the catch basins were covered with steel plates (see Fig. 1). On May 28, after a 1.03 inch rainfall, an individual or individuals cut away the dirt road berm to allow the discharge of mud and sand into the pond. This also caused erosion to the pond bank.

Had the appropriate management practices been used by the DPW, or included in an order of conditions from the Conservation Commission, many of the problems associated with the flooding and erosion of sediments could have been avoided.

It is routine that the Falmouth Conservation Commission requires the installation of hay bales and silt fencing between construction sites and wetland resource areas. However, hay bales and silt fencing were not installed on Gifford Street until after the problems occurred. Equally important, no appropriate similar stormwater inlet protection strategies were installed.

I wanted to take this opportunity to encourage the Conservation Commission (and the DPW) to also always require the installation of stormwater inlet best management practices wherever it is probable that catch basins will collect sediments from construction activities and discharge them to wetlands and surface waters.



Covering catch basins with steel plates is not a recommended inlet protection technique by DEP or any other regulatory agency because stormwater has no place to go. Instead, a combination of filter fabric and hay bails is the technique typically used around catchbasin inlets and road cuts.

In June 2003, DEP reissued its 1997 manual titled “Massachusetts Erosion and Sediment Control Guidelines for Urban and Suburban Areas: A Guide for Planners, Designers, and Municipal Officials.” Attached to this letter are pages 93-102 from that document which discusses appropriate inlet protection techniques.



Fig. 1. Steel plate used to cover catchbasins near Sols Pond.

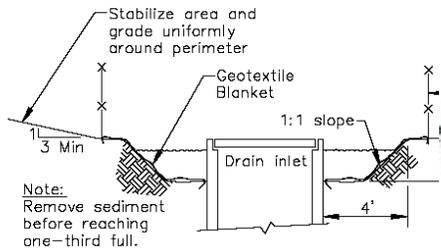
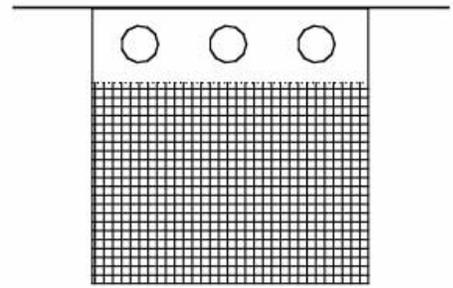
There are also commercial products available for use in these situations, and in Fig 2., we show a sampling of commercial and generic products. Please note that the Buzzards Bay Project is not endorsing any particular commercial product shown, we just mean to illustrate that many products and strategies are available.

I hope you and the other Conservation Commissioners find this information helpful.

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Costa, PhD
Executive Director

cc. Falmouth Board of Selectmen
Bill Owen, Falmouth DPW
Steve Pisch, Falmouth Engineering Department



Section A-A

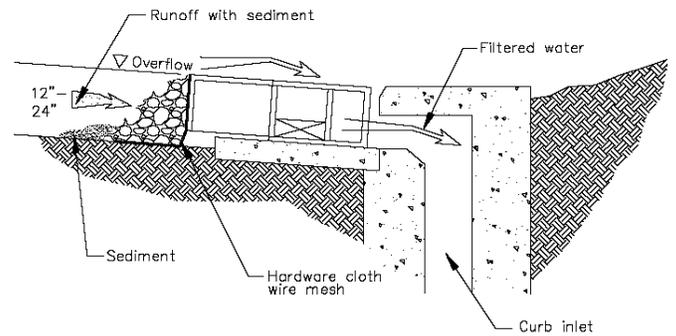
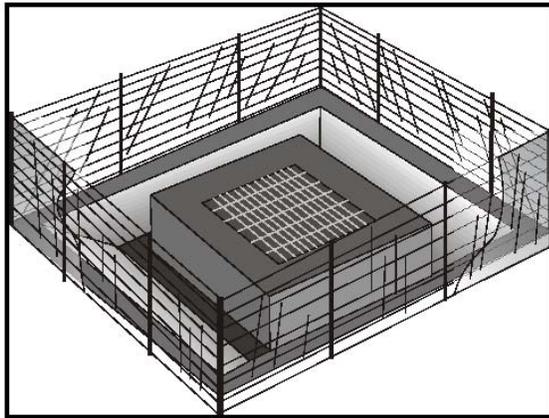
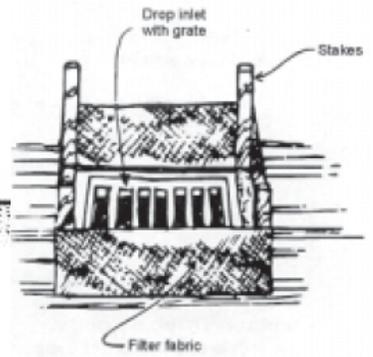
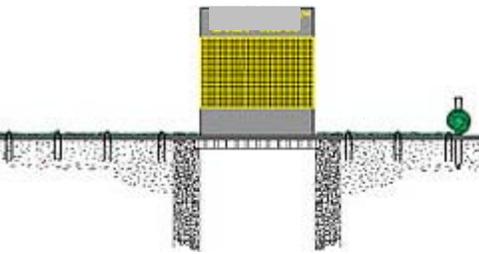


Fig. 2. Commercial products and generic strategies for inlet protection, some of which could have been employed on Gifford Street.