

Storm Water Job Trends

Industry employment opportunities and sought-after skills

By Carol Metzner

The ever-shrinking job market, aging baby boomers and rapid technology growth have created a need for storm water generalists who can do it all—use off-the-shelf and proprietary tools to conduct modeling studies; plan, assess and design storm water and water resource projects; resolve complex problems such as conflicting design requirements and unsuitability of conventional materials; and prepare and review a myriad of reports, including technical and regulatory specifications, contract documents and cost estimates.

No longer is storm water management a niche position filled by hydraulic and hydrologic specialists; now it encompasses everything from business development to contract bidding and administration to project management. Furthermore, storm water-related jobs are not limited to civil engineering and construction companies; they now are found in federal, state and local governments, scientific consulting and services firms, research and development companies and waste management organizations.

At the same time, rising population growth, crumbling infrastructure, growing concern for the environment and a need to comply with tighter environmental laws and regulations have created increasing demand for environmental engineers knowledgeable of storm water management. Many developers today are taking a proactive approach by working to prevent rather than control problems, requiring engineers who can use science and engineering principles to ensure the preservation of natural resources, the use of environmentally beneficial materials and the health and safety of residents. Environmental engineers also design remediation systems to counter the effects of pollutants on soil and groundwater and retrofit existing storm water systems to mimic predevelopment hydrology and restore ecosystems to their predevelopment state.

Storm Water Staff as Generalists

With unemployment on the rise, it is no surprise that some career boards report a 50% decline in the number

