Lesson 19: SCS (NRCS) Runoff Method
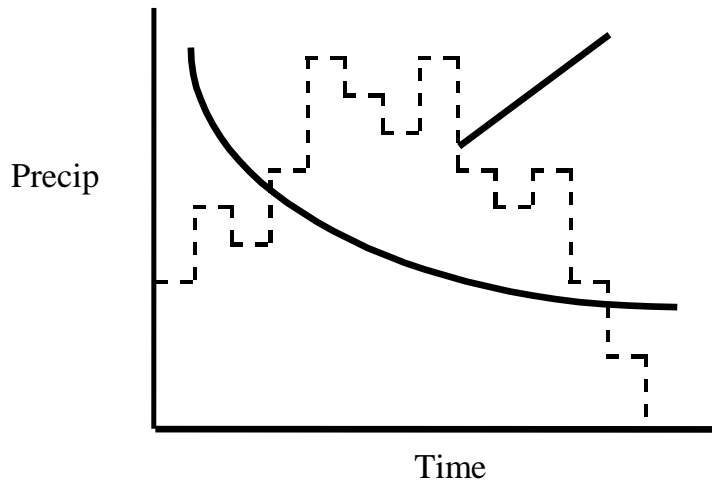
SCS (NRCS) Rainfall-Runoff Relation

P accumulated precipitation

I_a initial abstraction (before ponding)

F_a additional abstractions (after ponding)

P_e accumulated rainfall excess

SCS (NRCS) Parameter Estimation

The retention volume S is found by:

CN is the runoff curve number ($0<CN<100$)

Runoff curve number (CN)

CN is estimated based on:

- _____

- _____

- _____

For non-homogeneous catchments, a _____ CN is found:

$$CN = \sum_i \frac{A_i}{A} CN_i$$

Hydrologic Soil Group

Group A: (_____)

- deep sand, deep loess, aggregated silts

Group B:

- shallow loess, sandy loam

Group C:

- clay loams, shallow sandy loam

Group D: (_____)

- heavy plastic clays

Antecedent Moisture Conditions

AMC I (_____)

AMC II (_____)

AMC III (_____)

Tables contain *CN* for AMC II. Use equations 5.74 and 5.75 to convert to AMC I and AMC III.

Table 2-2a.—Runoff curve numbers for urban areas[1]

Cover description		Curve numbers for hydrologic soil group—			
Cover type and hydrologic condition	Average percent impervious area[2]	A	B	C	D
Fully developed urban areas (vegetation established)					
Open space (lawns, parks, golf courses, cemeteries, etc.)[3]:					
Poor condition (grass cover < 50%)		68	79	86	89
Fair condition (grass cover 50% to 75%)..........		49	69	79	84
Good condition (grass cover > 75%)		39	61	74	80
Impervious areas:					
Paved parking lots, roofs, driveways, etc. (excluding right-of-way).		98	98	98	98
Streets and roads:					
Paved; curbs and storm sewers (excluding right-of-way)................................		98	98	98	98
Paved; open ditches (including right-of-way)		83	89	92	93
Gravel (including right-of-way)		76	85	89	91
Dirt (including right-of-way)		72	82	87	89
Western desert urban areas:					
Natural desert landscaping (pervious areas only)[4]...		63	77	85	88
Artificial desert landscaping (impervious weed barrier, desert shrub with 1- to 2-inch sand or gravel mulch and basin borders).		96	96	96	96
Urban districts:					
Commercial and business..........................	85	89	92	94	95
Industrial.......................................	72	81	88	91	93
Residential districts by average lot size:					
1/8 acre or less (town houses).....................	65	77	85	90	92
1/4 acre	38	61	75	83	87
1/3 acre	30	57	72	81	86
1/2 acre	25	54	70	80	85
1 acre	20	51	68	79	84
2 acres	12	46	65	77	82
Developing urban areas					
Newly graded areas (pervious areas only, no vegetation)[5].................................		77	86	91	94
Idle lands (CN's are determined using cover types similar to those in table 2-2c).					

[1]Average runoff condition, and $I_a = 0.2S$.

[2]The average percent impervious area shown was used to develop the composite CN's. Other assumptions are as follows: impervious areas are directly connected to the drainage system, impervious areas have a CN of 98, and pervious areas are considered equivalent to open space in good hydrologic condition. CN's for other combinations of conditions may be computed using figure 2-3 or 2-4.

[3]CN's shown are equivalent to those of pasture. Composite CN's may be computed for other combinations of open space cover type.

[4]Composite CN's for natural desert landscaping should be computed using figures 2-3 or 2-4 based on the impervious area percentage (CN = 98) and the pervious area CN. The pervious area CN's are assumed equivalent to desert shrub in poor hydrologic condition.

[5]Composite CN's to use for the design of temporary measures during grading and construction should be computed using figure 2-3 or 2-4, based on the degree of development (impervious area percentage) and the CN's for the newly graded pervious areas.

Table 2-2b.—Runoff curve numbers for cultivated agricultural lands[1]

Cover description			Curve numbers for hydrologic soil group—			
Cover type	Treatment[2]	Hydrologic condition[3]	A	B	C	D
Fallow	Bare soil	—	77	86	91	94
	Crop residue cover (CR)	Poor	76	85	90	93
		Good	74	83	88	90
Row crops	Straight row (SR)	Poor	72	81	88	91
		Good	67	78	85	89
	SR + CR	Poor	71	80	87	90
		Good	64	75	82	85
	Contoured (C)	Poor	70	79	84	88
		Good	65	75	82	86
	C + CR	Poor	69	78	83	87
		Good	64	74	81	85
	Contoured & terraced (C&T)	Poor	66	74	80	82
		Good	62	71	78	81
	C&T + CR	Poor	65	73	79	81
		Good	61	70	77	80
Small grain	SR	Poor	65	76	84	88
		Good	63	75	83	87
	SR + CR	Poor	64	75	83	86
		Good	60	72	80	84
	C	Poor	63	74	82	85
		Good	61	73	81	84
	C + CR	Poor	62	73	81	84
		Good	60	72	80	83
	C&T	Poor	61	72	79	82
		Good	59	70	78	81
	C&T + CR	Poor	60	71	78	81
		Good	58	69	77	80
Close-seeded or broadcast legumes or rotation meadow	SR	Poor	66	77	85	89
		Good	58	72	81	85
	C	Poor	64	75	83	85
		Good	55	69	78	83
	C&T	Poor	63	73	80	83
		Good	51	67	76	80

[1] Average runoff condition, and $I_a = 0.2S$.

[2] Crop residue cover applies only if residue is on at least 5% of the surface throughout the year.

[3] Hydrologic condition is based on combination of factors that affect infiltration and runoff, including (a) density and canopy of vegetative areas, (b) amount of year-round cover, (c) amount of grass or close-seeded legumes in rotations, (d) percent of residue cover on the land surface (good ≥ 20%), and (e) degree of surface roughness.

Poor: Factors impair infiltration and tend to increase runoff.

Good: Factors encourage average and better than average infiltration and tend to decrease runoff.

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Table 2-2c.—Runoff curve numbers for other agricultural lands[1]

Cover description		Curve numbers for hydrologic soil group—			
Cover type	Hydrologic condition	A	B	C	D
Pasture. grassland. or range—continuous forage for grazing.[2]	Poor	68	79	86	89
	Fair	49	69	79	84
	Good	39	61	74	80
Meadow—continuous grass. protected from grazing and generally mowed for hay.	—	30	58	71	78
Brush—brush-weed-grass mixture with brush the major element.[3]	Poor	48	67	77	83
	Fair	35	56	70	77
	Good	[4]30	48	65	73
Woods—grass combination (orchard or tree farm).[5]	Poor	57	73	82	86
	Fair	43	65	76	82
	Good	32	58	72	79
Woods.[6]	Poor	45	66	77	83
	Fair	36	60	73	79
	Good	[4]30	55	70	77
Farmsteads—buildings. lanes, driveways, and surrounding lots.	—	59	74	82	86

[1]Average runoff condition. and $I_a = 0.2S$.

[2]Poor: <50% ground cover or heavily grazed with no mulch.
Fair: 50 to 75% ground cover and not heavily grazed.
Good: >75% ground cover and lightly or only occasionally grazed.

[3]Poor: <50% ground cover.
Fair: 50 to 75% ground cover.
Good: >75% ground cover.

[4]Actual curve number is less than 30: use CN = 30 for runoff computations.

[5]CN's shown were computed for areas with 50% woods and 50% grass (pasture) cover. Other combinations of conditions may be computed from the CN's for woods and pasture.

[6]Poor: Forest litter. small trees. and brush are destroyed by heavy grazing or regular burning.
Fair: Woods are grazed but not burned. and some forest litter covers the soil.
Good: Woods are protected from grazing. and litter and brush adequately cover the soil.