

BMP C207: Check Dams

<i>Purpose</i>	Construction of small dams across a swale or ditch reduces the velocity of concentrated flow and dissipates energy at the check dam.
<i>Conditions of Use</i>	<p>Where temporary channels or permanent channels are not yet vegetated, channel lining is infeasible, and velocity checks are required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check dams may not be placed in streams unless approved by the State Department of Fish and Wildlife. Check dams may not be placed in wetlands without approval from a permitting agency.• Check dams shall not be placed below the expected backwater from any salmonid bearing water between October 1 and May 31 to ensure that there is no loss of high flow refuge habitat for overwintering juvenile salmonids and emergent salmonid fry.
<i>Design and Installation Specifications</i>	<p>Whatever material is used, the dam should form a triangle when viewed from the side. This prevents undercutting as water flows over the face of the dam rather than falling directly onto the ditch bottom.</p> <p>Check dams in association with sumps work more effectively at slowing flow and retaining sediment than just a check dam alone. A deep sump should be provided immediately upstream of the check dam.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In some cases, if carefully located and designed, check dams can remain as permanent installations with very minor regrading. They may be left as either spillways, in which case accumulated sediment would be graded and seeded, or as check dams to prevent further sediment from leaving the site.• Check dams can be constructed of either rock or pea-gravel filled bags. Numerous new products are also available for this purpose. They tend to be re-usable, quick and easy to install, effective, and cost efficient.• Check dams should be placed perpendicular to the flow of water.• The maximum spacing between the dams shall be such that the toe of the upstream dam is at the same elevation as the top of the downstream dam.• Keep the maximum height at 2 feet at the center of the dam.• Keep the center of the check dam at least 12 inches lower than the outer edges at natural ground elevation.• Keep the side slopes of the check dam at 2:1 or flatter.• Key the stone into the ditch banks and extend it beyond the abutments a minimum of 18 inches to avoid washouts from overflow around the dam.

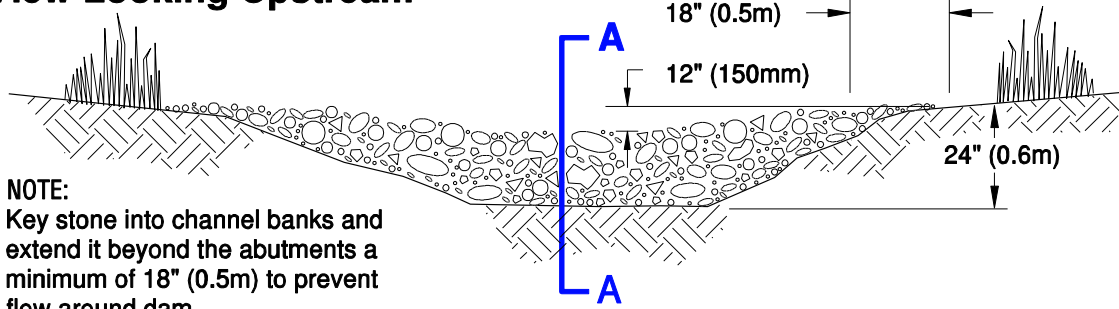
- Use filter fabric foundation under a rock or sand bag check dam. If a blanket ditch liner is used, this is not necessary. A piece of organic or synthetic blanket cut to fit will also work for this purpose.
- Rock check dams shall be constructed of appropriately sized rock. The rock must be placed by hand or by mechanical means (no dumping of rock to form dam) to achieve complete coverage of the ditch or swale and to ensure that the center of the dam is lower than the edges. The rock used must be large enough to stay in place given the expected design flow through the channel.
- In the case of grass-lined ditches and swales, all check dams and accumulated sediment shall be removed when the grass has matured sufficiently to protect the ditch or swale - unless the slope of the swale is greater than 4 percent. The area beneath the check dams shall be seeded and mulched immediately after dam removal.
- Ensure that channel appurtenances, such as culvert entrances below check dams, are not subject to damage or blockage from displaced stones. Figure 4.13 depicts a typical rock check dam.

Maintenance Standards

Check dams shall be monitored for performance and sediment accumulation during and after each runoff producing rainfall. Sediment shall be removed when it reaches one half the sump depth.

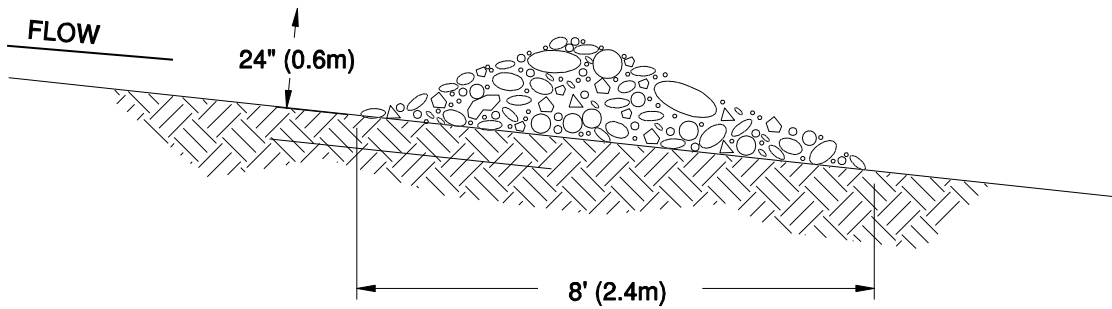
- Anticipate submergence and deposition above the check dam and erosion from high flows around the edges of the dam.
- If significant erosion occurs between dams, install a protective riprap liner in that portion of the channel.

View Looking Upstream



NOTE:
Key stone into channel banks and extend it beyond the abutments a minimum of 18" (0.5m) to prevent flow around dam.

Section A - A



Spacing Between Check Dams

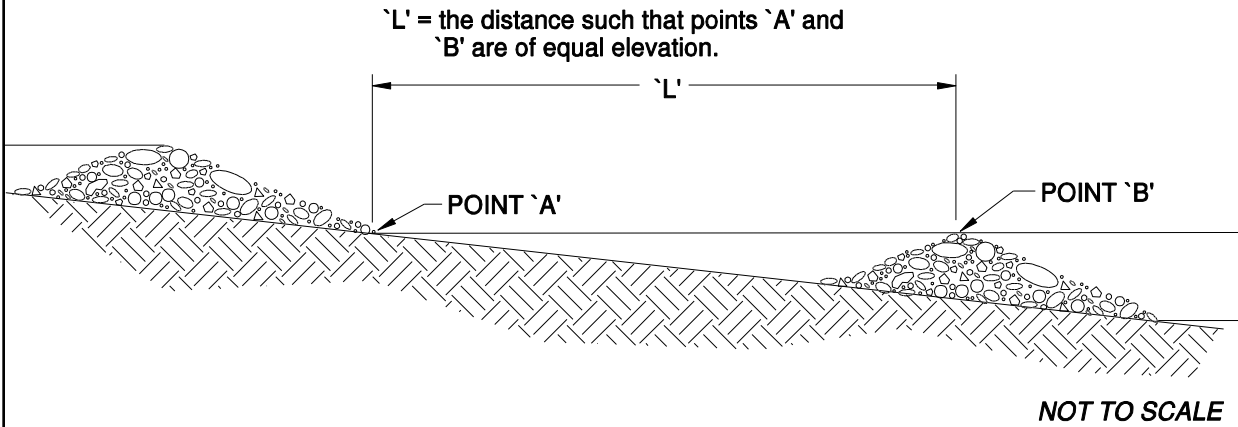


Figure 4.13 – Check Dams