Water For The World

Designing a Hydraulic Ram Pump

Technical Note No. RWS.4.D.5

[Index | Bottom]

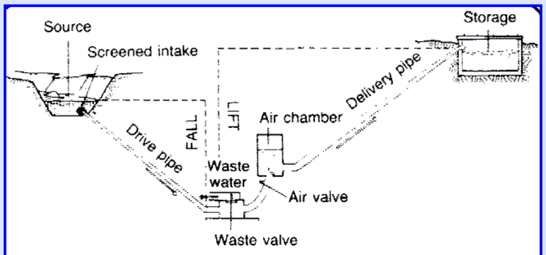

Figure 1. Hydraulic Ram Pump

A hydraulic ram or impulse pump is a device which uses the energy of falling water to lift a lesser amount of water to a higher elevation than the source. See Figure 1. There are only two moving parts, thus there is little to wear out. Hydraulic rams are relatively economical to purchase and install. One can be built with detailed plans and if properly installed, they will give many trouble-free years of service with no pumping costs. For these reasons, the hydraulic ram is an attractive solution where a large gravity flow exists. A ram should be considered when there is a source that can provide at least seven times more water than the ram is to pump and the water is, or can be made, free of trash and sand. There must be a site for the ram at least 0.5m below the water source and water must be needed at a level higher than the source.

Factors in Design

Before a ram can be selected, several design factors must be known. These are shown in Figure 1 and include:

1. The difference in height between the water source and the pump site (called vertical fall).
2. The difference in height between the pump site and the point of storage or use (lift).
3. The quantity (Q) of flow available from the source.
4. The quantity of water required.
5. The length of pipe from the source to the pump site (called the drive pipe).
6. The length of pipe from the pump to the storage site (called the delivery pipe).

Once this information has been obtained, a calculation can be made to see if the amount of water needed can be supplied by a ram. The formula is: D=(S x F x E)/L Where:

D = Amount delivered in liters per 24 hours.
S = Quantity of water supplied in liters per minute.
F = The fall or height of the source above the ram in meters.
E = The efficiency of the ram (for commercial models use 0.66, for home built use 0.33 unless otherwise indicated).

L = The lift height of the point of use above the ram in meters.

Table 1 solves this formula for rams with efficiencies of 66 percent, a supply of 1 liter per minute, and with the working fall and lift shown in the table. For supplies greater than 1 liter/minute, simply multiply by the number of liters supplied.

Table 1. Ram Performance Data for a Supply of 1 liter/minute
Liters Delivered over 24 Hours

Working Fall (m)	Lift - Vertical Height to which Water is Raised Above the Ram (m)											
	5	**7.5**	**10**	**15**	**20**	**30**	**40**	**50**	**60**	**80**	**100**	**125**
1.0	144	77	65	33	29	19.5	12.5					
1.5		135	96.5	70	54	36	19	15				
2.0		220	156	105	79	53	33	25	19.5	12.5		
2.5		280	200	125	100	66	40.5	32.5	24	15.5	12	
3.0			260	180	130	87	65	51	40	27	17.5	12
3.5				215	150	100	75	60	46	31.5	20	14
4.0				255	173	115	86	69	53	36	23	16
5.0				310	236	155	118	94	71.5	50	36	23
6.0					282	185	140	112	93.5	64.5	47.5	34.5
7.0						216	163	130	109	82	60	48
8.0							187	149	125	94	69	55
9.0							212	168	140	105	84	62
10.0							245	187	156	117	93	69
12.0							295	225	187	140	113	83
14.0								265	218	167	132	97
16.0									250	187	150	110
18.0									280	210	169	124
20.0										237	188	140

Components of Hydraulic Ram

A hydraulic ram installation consists of a supply, a drive pipe, the ram, a supply line and usually a storage tank. These are shown in Figure 1. Each of these component parts is discussed below:

Supply. The intake must be designed to keep trash and sand out of the supply since these can plug up the ram. If the water is not naturally free of these materials, the intake should be screened or a settling basin provided.

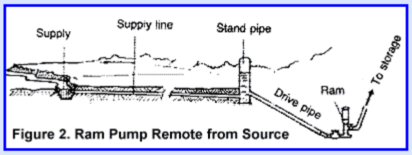

Figure 2. Ram Pump Remote from Source

When the source is remote from the ram site, the supply line can be designed to conduct the water to a drive pipe as shown in Figure 2. The supply line, if needed, should be at least one pipe diameter larger than the drive pipe.

Drive pipe. The drive pipe must be made of a non-flexible material for maximum efficiency. This is usually galvanized iron pipe, although other materials cased in concrete will work. In order to reduce head loss due to friction, the length of the pipe divided by the diameter of the pipe should be within the range of 150-1,000. Table 2 shows the minimum and maximum pipe lengths for various pipe sizes.

Table 2. Range of Drive Pipe Lengths for Various Pipe Diameters

Drive Pipe Size (mm)	Length (meters)	
	Minimum	Maximum
13	2	13
20	3	20
25	4	25
30	4.5	30
40	6	40
50	7.5	50
80	12	80
100	15	100

The drive pipe diameter is usually chosen based on the size of the ram and the manufacturer's recommendations as shown in Table 3. The length is four to six times the vertical fall.

Table 3. Drive Pipe Diameters by Hydram Manufacturer's Size Number

Hydram Size	1	2	3	3.5	4	5	6
Pipe Size (mm)	32	38	51	63.5	76	101	127

Ram. Rams can be constructed using commercially available check valves or by fabricating check valves. They are also available as manufactured units in various sizes and pumping capacities. Rams can be used in tandem to pump water if one ram is not large enough to supply the need. Each ram must have its own drive pipe, but all can pump through a common delivery pipe as shown in Figure 3.

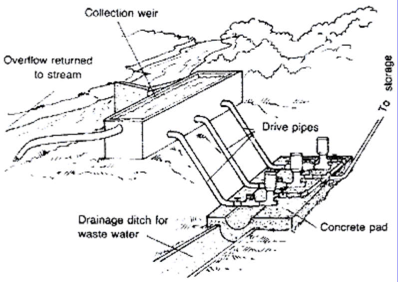

Figure 3. Multiple Rams with Common Delivery Pipe

In installing the ram, it is important that it be level, securely attached to an immovable base, preferably concrete, and that the waste-water be drained away. The pump can-not operate when submerged. Since the ram usually operates on a 24-hour basis the size can be determined for delivery over a 24-hour period. Table 4 shows hydraulic ram capacities for one manufacturer's Hydrams.

Table 4. Hydram Capacityby Manufacturer's Size Number

	Size of Hydram								
	1	2	3	3.5	4	5X	6X	5Y	6Y
Volume of Drive Water Needed (liters/min)	7-16	12-25	27-55	45-96	68-137	136-270	180-410	136-270	180-410
Maximum Lift (m)	150	150	120	120	120	105	105	105	

Delivery Pipe. The delivery pipe can be of any material that can withstand the water pressure. The size of the line can be estimated using Table 5.

Table 5. Sizing the Delivery Pipe

Delivery Pipe Size (mm)	Flow (liters/min)
30	6-36
40	37-60
50	61-90
80	91-234
100	235-360

Storage Tank. This is located at a level to provide water to the point of use. The size is based on the maximum demand per day.

Sizing a Hydraulic Ram

A small community consists of 10 homes with a total of 60 people. There is a spring l0m lower than the village which drains to a wash which is 15m below the spring. The spring produces 30,000 liters of water per day. There is a location for a ram on the bank of the wash. This site is 5m higher than the wash and 35m from the spring. A public standpost is planned for the village 200m from the ram site. The lift required to the top of the storage tank is 23m. The following are the steps in design.

Identify the necessary design factors:

1. Vertical fall is 10m.

2. Lift is 23m to top of storage tank.

3. Quantity of flow available equals 30,000 liters per day divided by 1,440 minutes per day (30,000/1,440) = 20.8 liters per minute.

4. The quantity of water required assuming 40 liters per day per person as maximum use is 60 people x 40 liters per day = 2,400 liters per day.

2,400/1,440 = 1.66 liters per minute (use 2 liters per minute)

5. The length of the drive pipe is 35m.

6. The length of the delivery pipe is 200m.

The above data can be used to size the system. Using Table 1, for a fall of 10m and a lift of 80m, 117 liters can be pumped a day for each liter per minute supplied. Since 2,400 liters per day is required, the number of liters per minute needed can be found by dividing 2,400 by 117:

2,400/117 = 20.5 liters per minute supply required.

From item 3 above, the supply available is 20.8 liters per minute so the source is sufficient.

Table 3 can now be used to select a ram size. The volume of driving water or supply needed is 20.5 liters per minute. From Table 4, a No. 2 Hydram requires from 12 to 25 liters per minute. A No. 2 Hydram can lift water to a maximum height of 150m according to Table 4. This will be adequate since the lift to the top of the storage tank is 23m. Thus, a No. 2 Hydram would be selected.

Table 3 shows that for a No. 2 Hydram, the minimum drive pipe diameter is 38mm. Table 2 indicates that the minimum and maximum length for a 40mm pipe (the closest size to 38mm) is 6m-40m. Since the spring is 35m away, the length is all right. Table 5 can be used to select a delivery pipe 30mm in diameter which fits the supply needed, 20.5 liters per minute.

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[Top | Index | Lifewater Home]

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Top Level Index

[Top | Bottom]

HUMAN RESOURCES

[Index | Bottom]

Overview of Water and Sanitation System Development (HR.1) PDF/HTML

Community Participation (HR.2)

- Methods of Initiating Community Participation in Water Supply and Sanitation (HR.2.M) PDF
- Community Participation in Planning Water Supply and Sanitation Programs (HR.2.P) PDF
- Community Participation in Implementing Water Supply and Sanitation Programs (HR.2.I) PDF

Operation and Maintenance Training (HR.3)

- Methods of Operation and Maintenance Training (HR.3.M) PDF
- Planning Operation and Maintenance Training (HR.3.P) PDF
- Implementing Operation and Maintenance Training (HR.3.1) PDF
- Evaluating Operation and Maintenance Training (HR.3.I.2) PDF

RURAL WATER SUPPLY

[Index | Bottom]

Overview of Rural Water Supply (RWS.G) PDF/HTML

Surface Water (RWS.1)

- Methods of Developing Sources of Surface Water (RWS.1.M) PDF/HTML
- Planning How to Use Sources of Surface Water (RWS.1.P.1) PDF
- Conducting Sanitary Surveys to Determine Acceptable Surface Water (RWS.1.P.2) PDF
- Selecting a Source of Surface Water (RWS.1.P.3) PDF

- Choosing Where to Place Intakes (RWS.1.P.4) PDF
- Evaluating Rainfall Catchments (RWS.1.P.5) PDF
- Designing Structures for Springs (RWS.1.D.1) PDF
- Designing Intakes for Ponds, Lakes and Reservoirs (RWS.1.D.2) PDF
- Designing Intakes for Streams and Rivers (RWS.1.D.3) PDF
- Designing Roof Catchments (RWS.1.D.4) PDF
- Designing Small Dams (RWS.1.D.5) PDF
- Constructing Structures for Springs (RWS.1.C.1) PDF
- Constructing Intakes for Ponds, Lakes and Reservoirs (RWS.1.C.2) PDF
- Constructing Intakes for Streams and Rivers (RWS.1.C.3) PDF
- Constructing, Operating and Maintaining Roof Catchments (RWS.1.C.4) PDF
- Constructing Small Dams (RWS.1.C.5) PDF
- Maintaining Structures for Springs (RWS.1.O.1) PDF
- Maintaining Intakes (RWS.1.O.2) PDF
- Maintaining Small Dams (RWS.1.O.5) PDF

Ground Water (RWS.2)

[Index | Bottom]

- Methods of Developing Sources of Ground Water (RWS.2.M) PDF
- Planning How to Use Sources of Ground Water (RWS.2.P.1) PDF
- Selecting a Method of Well Construction (RWS.2.P.2) PDF
- Selecting a Well Site (RWS.2.P.3) PDF
- Designing Dug Wells (RWS.2.D.1) PDF
- Designing Driven Wells (RWS.2.D.2) PDF
- Designing Jetted Wells (RWS.2.D.3) PDF
- Designing Bored or Augered Wells (RWS.2.D.4) PDF
- Designing Cable Tool Wells (RWS.2.D.5) PDF
- Constructing Dug Wells (RWS.2.C.1) PDF
- Constructing Driven Wells (RWS.2.C.2) PDF
- Constructing Jetted Wells (RWS.2.C.3) PDF
- Constructing Bored or Augered Wells (RWS.2.C.4) PDF
- Constructing Cable Tool Wells (RWS.2.C.5) PDF
- Maintaining Well Logs (RWS.2.C.6) PDF
- Testing the Yield of Wells (RWS.2.C.7) PDF
- Finishing Wells (RWS.2.C.8) PDF
- Disinfecting Wells (RWS.2.C.9) PDF

Water Treatment (RWS.3)

[Index | Bottom]

- Methods of Water Treatment (RWS.3.M) PDF
- Determining the Need for Water Treatment (RWS.3.P.1) PDF
- Taking a Water Sample (RWS.3.P.2) PDF
- Analyzing a Water Sample (RWS.3.P.3) PDF
- Planning a Water Treatment System (RWS.3.P.4) PDF
- Designing Basic Household Water Treatment Systems (RWS.3.D.1) PDF
- Designing a Small Community Sedimentation Basin (RWS.3.D.2) PDF
- Designing a Slow Sand Filter (RWS.3.D.3) PDF
- Designing a Small Community Disinfection Unit (RWS.3.D.4) PDF
- Water Treatment in Emergencies (RWS.3.D.5) PDF
- Constructing a Household Sand Filter (RWS.3.C.1) PDF
- Constructing a Sedimentation Basin (RWS.3.C.2) PDF
- Constructing a Slow Sand Filter (RWS.3.C.3) PDF
- Constructing a Disinfection Unit (RWS.3.C.4) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining Household Treatment Systems (RWS.3.O.1) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining a Sedimentation Basin (RWS.3.O.2) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining a Slow Sand Filter (RWS.3.O.3) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining a Chemical Disinfection Unit (RWS.3.O.4) PDF

Water Distribution (RWS.4)

[Index | Bottom]

- Methods of Delivering Water (RWS.4.M) PDF
- Choosing Between Gravity Flow and Pumps (RWS.4.P.1) PDF
- Choosing Between Community Distribution Systems and Household Water (RWS.4.P.2) PDF
- Selecting Pipe Materials (RWS.4.P.3) PDF
- Selecting a Power Source for Pumps (RWS.4.P.4) PDF
- Selecting Pumps (RWS.4.P.5) PDF
- Manufacturing Hand Pumps Locally (RWS.4.P.6) PDF
- Designing a System of Gravity Flow (RWS.4.D.1) PDF
- Determining Pumping Requirements (RWS.4.D.2) PDF
- Designing a Transmission Main (RWS.4.D.3) PDF
- Designing Community Distribution Systems (RWS.4.D.4) PDF
- Designing a Hydraulic Ram Pump (RWS.4.D.5) PDF/HTML
- Installing Pipes (RWS.4.C.1) PDF
- Installing Mechanical Pumps (RWS.4.C.2) PDF
- Installing Hand Pumps (RWS.4.C.3) PDF
- Constructing Community Distribution Systems (RWS.4.C.4) PDF
- Constructing a Distribution System with Household Connections (RWS.4.C.5) PDF
- Detecting and Correcting Leaking Pipes (RWS.4.O.1) PDF

- Operating and Maintaining Mechanical Pumps (RWS.4.O.2) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining Hand Pumps (RWS.4.O.3) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining Household Water Connections (RWS.4.O.5) PDF

Water Storage (RWS.5)

[Index | Bottom]

- Methods of Storing Water (RWS.5.M) PDF
- Determining the Need for Water Storage (RWS.5.P.1) PDF
- Designing a Household Cistern (RWS.5.D.1) PDF
- Designing a Ground Level Storage Tank (RWS.5.D.2) PDF
- Designing an Elevated Storage Tank (RWS.5.D.3) PDF
- Constructing a Household Cistern (RWS.5.C.1) PDF
- Constructing a Ground Level Storage Tank (RWS.5.C.2) PDF
- Constructing an Elevated Storage Tank (RWS.5.C.3) PDF
- Maintaining Water Storage Tanks (RWS.5.O.1) PDF

SANITATION

[Index | Bottom]

Overview of Sanitation (SAN.G) PDF

Simple Excreta and Washwater Disposal (SAN.1)

- Simple Methods of Excreta Disposal (SAN.1.M.1) PDF
- Simple Methods of Washwater Disposal (SAN.1.M.2) PDF
- Planning Simple Excreta and Washwater Disposal Systems (SAN.1.P) PDF
- Designing Slabs for Privies (SAN.1.D.1) PDF
- Designing Pits for Privies (SAN.1.D.2) PDF
- Designing Privy Shelters (SAN.1.D.3) PDF
- Designing Aqua Privies (SAN.1.D.4) PDF
- Designing Bucket Latrines (SAN.1.D.5) PDF
- Designing Compost Toilets (SAN.1.D.6) PDF
- Designing Sumps, Soakage Pits and Trenches (SAN.1.D.7) PDF
- Constructing Slabs for Privies (SAN.1.C.1) PDF
- Constructing Pits for Privies (SAN.1.C.2) PDF
- Constructing Privy Shelters (SAN.1.C.3) PDF
- Constructing Aqua Privies (SAN.1.C.4) PDF

- Constructing Bucket Latrines (SAN.1.C.5) PDF
- Constructing Compost Toilets (SAN.1.C.6) PDF
- Constructing, Operating & Maintaining Sumps, Soakage Pits & Trenches (SAN.1.C.7) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining Privies (SAN.1.O.1) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining Aqua Privies (SAN.1.O.4) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining Bucket Latrines (SAN.1.O.5) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining Compost Toilets (SAN.1.O.6) PDF

Combined Excreta and Washwater Disposal (SAN.2)

[Index | Bottom]

- Methods of Combined Washwater and Excreta Disposal (SAN.2.M) PDF
- Planning Combined Washwater and Excreta Disposal Systems (SAN.2.P.1) PDF
- Estimating Sewage or Washwater Flows (SAN.2.P.2) PDF
- Determining Soil Suitability (SAN.2.P.3) PDF
- Designing Subsurface Absorption Systems (SAN.2.D.1) PDF
- Designing Cesspools (SAN.2.D.2) PDF
- Designing Septic Tanks (SAN.2.D.3) PDF
- Designing Sewer Systems (SAN.2.D.4) PDF
- Designing Stabilization Ponds (SAN.2.D.5) PDF
- Designing a System of Stabilization Ponds (SAN.2.D.6) PDF
- Designing Mechanically Aerated Lagoons (SAN.2.D.7) PDF
- Designing Non-Conventional Absorption Disposal Systems (SAN.2.D.8) PDF
- Constructing, Operating & Maintaining Subsurface Absorption Systems (SAN.2.C.1) PDF
- Constructing Cesspools (SAN.2.C.2) PDF
- Constructing Septic Tanks (SAN.2.C.3) PDF
- Constructing Sewer Systems (SAN.2.C.4) PDF
- Constructing Stabilization Ponds (SAN.2.C.5) PDF
- Constructing Mechanically Aerated Lagoons (SAN.2.C.7) PDF
- Constructing, Operating & Maintaining Non-Conventional Absorption Systems (SAN.2.C.8) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining Septic Tanks (SAN.2.O.3) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining Sewer Systems (SAN.2.O.4) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining Stabilization Ponds (SAN.2.O.5) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining Mechanically Aerated Lagoons (SAN.2.O.7) PDF

Solid Waste Disposal (SAN.3)

[Index | Bottom]

- Methods of Solid Waste Management (SAN. 3. M) PDF
- Planning Solid Waste Management Systems (SAN.3.P) PDF
- Designing a Landfill (SAN.3.D.1) PDF

- Designing a Composting System (SAN.3.D.2) PDF
- Designing a Solid Waste Collection System (SAN.3.D.3) PDF
- Designing a Biogas System (SAN.3.D.4) PDF
- Constructing a Biogas System (SAN.3.C.4) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining a Landfill (SAN.3.O.1) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining a Composting System (SAN.3.O.2) PDF
- Operating a Solid Waste Collection System (SAN.3.O.3) PDF
- Operating and Maintaining a Biogas System (SAN.3.O.4)PDF

DISEASE

[Index | Bottom]

Overview of Diseases (DIS.G) PDF /HTML

Water Supply, Sanitation and Disease (DIS.1)

- Means of Disease Transmission (DIS.1.M.1) PDF
- Methods of Improving Environmental Health Conditions (DIS.1.M.2) PDF
- Planning Disease Control Programs (DIS.1.P.1) PDF

Specific Diseases (DIS.2)

- Methods of Controlling Schistosomiasis (DIS.2.M.1) PDF
- Methods of Controlling African Trypanosomiasis (DIS.2.M.2) PDF
- Methods of Controlling South American Trypanosomiasis (DIS.2.M.3) PDF
- Methods of Controlling Enteric Diseases (DIS.2.M.4) PDF
- Methods of Controlling Onchocerciasis (DIS.2.M.5) PDF

[Index | Lifewater Home]

Home | About Lifewater | HELP | Training |
Water for the World | Gifts | Links

[Contact Us]

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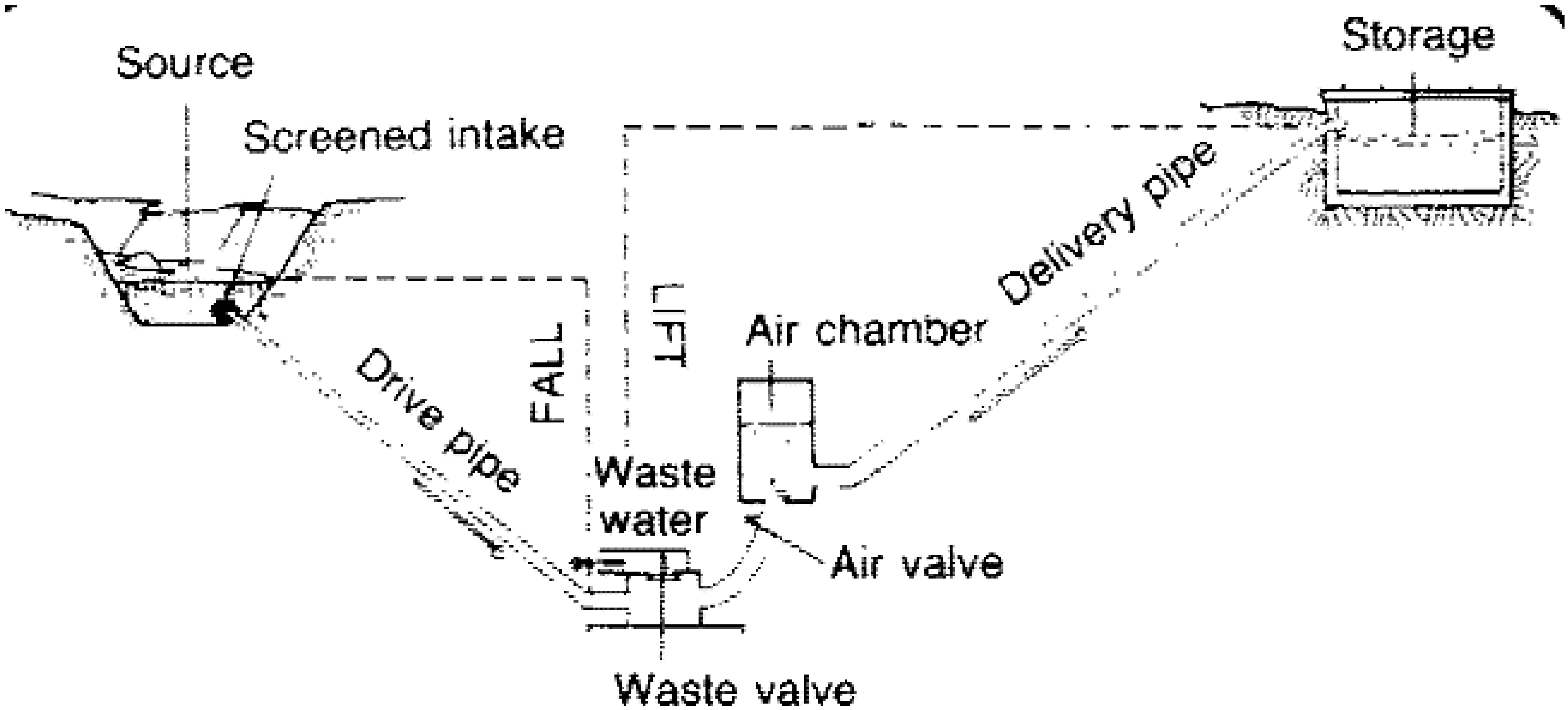

Figure 1. Hydraulic Ram Pump

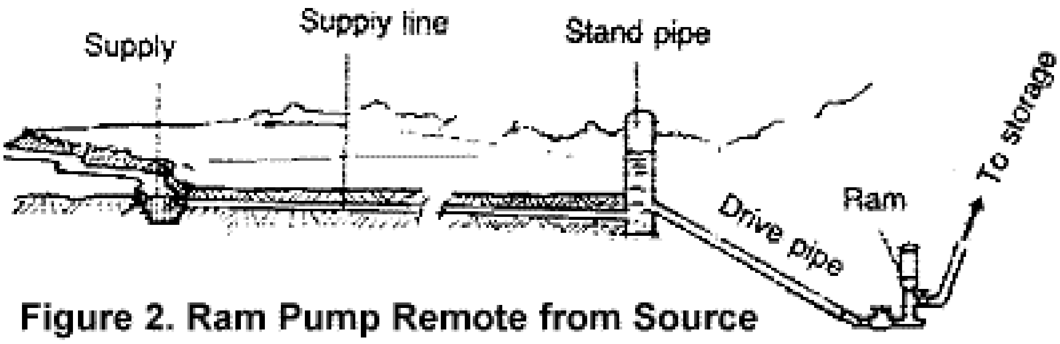

Figure 2. Ram Pump Remote from Source

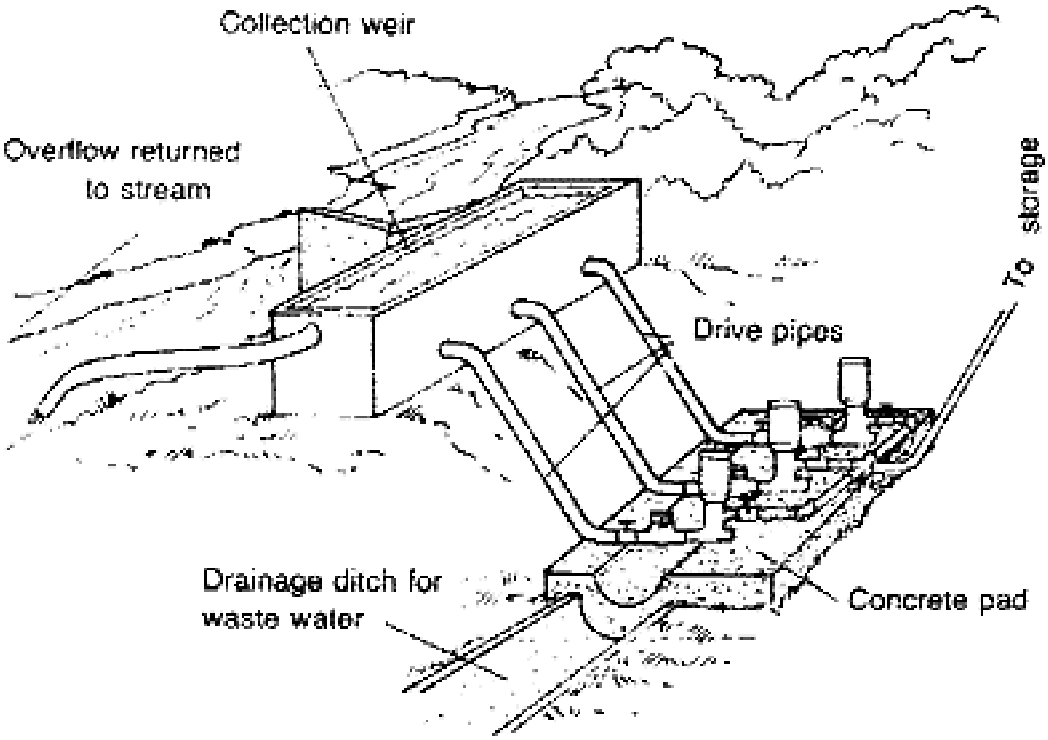

Figure 3. Multiple Rams with Common Delivery Pipe

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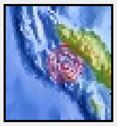

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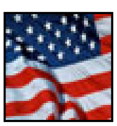

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- 01/11/05: New USAID Mission Director for India Sworn In
- 01/11/05: Remarks by USAID Administrator Andrew S. Natsios - US Relief Efforts to Tsunami-Affected Countries
- 01/10/05: Transcript and Video - President Bush Thanks USAID Employees and NGO Presidents
- 12/31/04: Editorial: Responding to Asia's Tragedy, by Administrator Natsios - Published in *The Washington Post*
- 12/29/04: Briefing by USAID Administrator Andrew S. Natsios - Coordination of Relief Assistance for Victims of the Recent Tsunamis
- 12/16/04: Sweet Water Canal Restoration Complete
- 12/13/04: Lloyd O. Pierson Sworn In As Head of USAID's Bureau for Africa
- 12/08/04: Remarks by Assistant Administrator Adolfo Franco at the Caribbean Central America Action (CCAA) Conference on the Caribbean Basin

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