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1	Turbidity reduction induced by Floating Treatment
2	Wetlands (FTW): a flume experiment to assess the
3	impact of flow velocity
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5	
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9	

10 **ABSTRACT**

11 The aim of the present study was to investigate the impact of the mean flow velocity on the Floating 12 Treatment Wetland (FTW) roots' network behaviour and associated opportunity for suspended solids 13 entrapment. The objective was to identify the appropriateness of a FTW to reduce turbidity in a retention 14 pond subject to specific flow regimes. A flume experiment with and without FTW was run under three 15 mean flow velocities impacting roots' inclinations and roots' water column occupancy. For initial turbidity 16 of 60-70 FNU, the results indicate that inclusion of a FTW would increase turbidity reduction by up to 37%, 34% and 45% under flow velocity of 0.023 m/s (V1), 0.097 m/s (V2) and 0.181 m/s (V3), 17 18 respectively, compared to the Control (experiments without FTW). This suggests that even under high flow velocity, inducing the roots to flatten under the mat, the FTW provided an efficient additional 19 20 particles removal process to settlement, i.e. entrapment of suspended solids into FTW roots' network. For V1, turbidity thresholds for good and very good water quality status (EU guidelines) were reached 21 22 about 1:00 and 5:30 (h:mm) faster with the inclusion of a FTW. Providing that flow ratio through the FTW 23 roots' network could be promoted in a real retention pond, such as in the present flume experiment, potential turbidity removal efficiency solely induced by a FTW covering 16% of a pond length and 70% 24 25 of pond width could be extrapolated for various pond sizes. As an example, the inclusion of a 8m long FTW in a 50m long pond with inlet turbidity of 60-70 FNU, could improve turbidity removal efficiency by 26 27 \sim 32% at low flow velocity (V1) and by \sim 10% at medium and high flow velocities (V2 and V3).

28

29 KEYWORDS

- 30 Floating treatment wetland, flow velocity, hydraulic impact, turbidity, particle size distribution, Zeta
- 31 potential

35 1 INTRODUCTION

A significant fraction of pollutants commonly found in stormwater runoff tend to be associated to small 36 37 size particles (Kayhanian et al., 2012; Nielsen et al., 2015) which do not easily settle. There is thus an 38 interest in improving the treatment of fine particles that sedimentation ponds lack to remove. Floating 39 Treatment Wetlands (FTW) are hydroponic systems composed of a floating mat planted with emergent 40 aquatic plants that extend their roots into the water column. FTWs can be installed on any pond type 41 (e.g. stormwater ponds, wastewater lagoons) with the aim to introduce wetland like vegetation and allow 42 for additional pollutant removal processes to take place such as direct plant uptake, adsorption, 43 precipitation, nitrification, denitrification and particles' entrapment into the roots' network. Several 44 research studies have shown that FTWs can efficiently remove suspended solids, metals and nutrients 45 from contaminated waters (Abed et al., 2017; Barco and Borin, 2020; Benvenuti et al., 2018; Borne, 46 2014; Borne et al., 2013; De Stefani et al., 2011; Headley and Tanner, 2006; Van De Moortel et al., 47 2010).

48 However the removal efficiency is significantly influenced by the pollutant types and inlet loads, the 49 design characteristics such as pond depth (Pavlineri et al., 2017), and the hydraulic conditions (Khan 50 et al., 2013). It is also thought that the fraction of flow which goes through the roots influences the 51 treatment performance (Borne et al., 2015; Headley and Tanner, 2012; Machado Xavier et al., 2018). 52 This is particularly true for the removal of fine suspended solids which do not settle easily and are 53 removed by entrapment into the FTW's roots network. The properties of the physical filter provided by 54 the roots' network is however impacted by the flow velocity which can flatten the roots under the floating 55 mat. This can generate preferential flow path below the roots, reducing opportunity for the incoming flow 56 and sediments to go through and be entrapped by the roots' network.

It is thus of interest to investigate the impact of flow velocity on the roots' network behaviour and associated opportunity for suspended solids entrapment. This would help identifying the appropriateness of a FTW to remove suspended solids in a retention pond subject to specific flow velocities. The aim of the present study was to investigate in a flume experiment the impact of mean flow velocity on turbidity reduction by a FTW.

62 2 MATERIAL AND METHODS

63 2.1 Flume experiment

64 Currently, no specific design criteria in terms of FTW surface coverage ratio are available. Real scale

65 applications have been implemented with various coverage ratios ranging from 8 to 50% of pond surface 66 area (Borne et al., 2013; Maxwell et al., 2020; Schwammberger et al., 2019; Tharp et al., 2019; Winston 67 et al., 2013). In the aim to minimize FTWs implementation and maintenance cost, the present study's 68 objective was to focus on a relatively low coverage ratio. A flume was thus equipped with a BioHaven 69 floating mat covering about 70% of flume width (0.67m) and 16% of the flume length (4.9m) accounting 70 for 11% of the flume open water surface area (Fig. 1a). The floating mat (0.47m*0.8m, width x length) 71 was planted with four Carex riparia 2.5 years before the experiment. The plants were therefore well 72 developed with roots' majority length (90th percentile) of 40cm in the present study (Fig. 1b). The FTW 73 thus occupied a significant ratio of the flume cross-sectional area perpendicular to the flow direction (62 74 %), promoting water to flow through the roots' network. The flume was designed as a closed loop to 75 generate a continuous flow using an axial turbine (Fig. 1a). Sediments collected from the bottom of a 76 highway stormwater retention pond were poured directly into the flume under full speed (~0.7m/s) to 77 reach a turbidity comprised between 60-70 Formazin Nephelometric Unit (FNU). Once water 78 homogeneity was reached, flume average velocity was reduced to V1, V2 or V3 and the FTW was 79 installed on the flume. The flume was entirely emptied and washed between each run, and similar mass 80 of sediments was added at the beginning of each run to reach 60-70 FNU. After each run the FTW was 81 removed from the flume and roots were gently washed with a water hose to remove attached sediments. 82 The roots needed only minimal washing as the sediments were not firmly attached as discussed in the "results and discussion" section. The FTW module was then kept in a tank filled with tap water until the 83 84 next run. V1, V2 and V3 were selected depending on the roots' vertical inclination the flow would produce 85 and were 0.023m/s, 0.097m/s and 0.181m/s, respectively (Fig. 1b). Each run lasted about 22h. This 86 enabled to assess the impact of different roots' inclinations (inducing different roots' water column 87 occupancy) on turbidity reduction. Under static conditions the plant roots extended almost over the entire 88 depth of the flume (i.e 87% of the flume water depth).

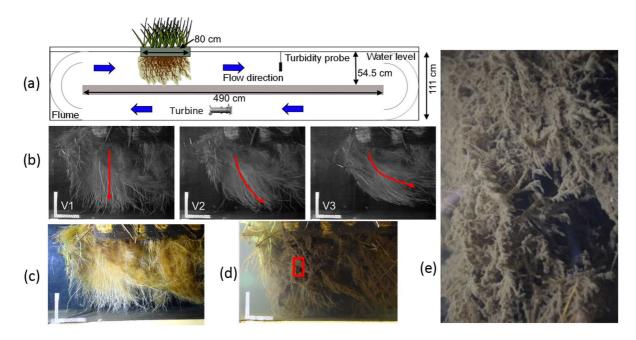


Fig. 1 Side view of the flume experiment equipped with a FTW (a), roots' vertical inclination for
different flume average flow velocities (V1=0.023 m/s, V2=0.097 m/s, V3=0.181 m/s) (b) and picture
of the FTW before (c) and after a flume experiment (d,e) as well as zoom-in of the root network
charged with particles (e). Arrows represent main roots' inclination. Rectangle in (d) indicates the
location of roots zoom-in (e). The scale on b, c and d is 13 cm high and 13 cm wide.

89

95 2.2 Suspended solids characterisation and monitoring

96 2.2.1 Turbidity measurement

97 Turbidity was measured continuously downstream of the FTW with a multiparameter meter Hanna HI 98 9829 equipped with a turbidity sensor (HI 7609829-4). This meter operates to the ISO 7027 method 99 using an infrared narrow band light source which is reportedly better suited to the measurement of small 100 particle sizes and expresses results in Formazin Nephelometric Unit (FNU) (Bright et al., 2020). By 101 comparison, the use of a wider band light source (400-600 nm) measuring turbidity in units of 102 Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (NTU) is suited to detection of a greater range of particle sizes, but is less 103 suitable for the detection of fine particles. Both methods use formazin calibration standards and while 104 having different sensitivity depending of particles characteristics, they are often considered equivalent 105 (World Health Organisation, 2017). Therefore for the purpose of this study and due to the lack of 106 regulatory threshold expressed in FNU, recorded values in the present experiment were directly 107 compared to thresholds for good (35 NTU) and very good (15 NTU) water quality defined in European 108 Directive 2000/60/EC (European Parliament, 2000).

109 The sensor was calibrated with formazin standards before each run and calibration was checked after

110 each run with calibration check solutions. Calibration checks were within 90-110% of expected values.

111 Records emphasized turbidity reduction over time, reflecting entrapment of suspended solids after

112 successive flows through the FTW roots' network.

The experiment was run twice for each velocity: with FTW and without FTW (as a control to assess
turbidity removal solely due to settlement). Turbidity removal efficiency at time t (REt) was calculated
as:

116 (1)
$$RE_t$$
 (%) = $\left(\frac{Turb_{t0} - Turb_t}{Turb_{t0}}\right) * 100$

117 Where :

• Turb_t : turbidity at time t

• Turb_{to}: turbidity at the beginning of the experiment

121 122

123

119 120

(2) $AddRE_t$ (%) = $RE_{t FTW} - RE_{t Control}$

Turbidity removal efficiency at time t solely induced by FTW inclusion (AddREt) was calculated as:

124 125

2.2.2 Sediments characterisation

126 Sediment samples collected from the stormwater retention pond were dried at 105°C until constant 127 weight. Weight Loss On Ignition (LOI), representative of the sample's organic carbon content (Wang et 128 al., 2010), was then determined by ashing 2 to 4 g of sample at 550°C for 12h. Particles electrostatic 129 charges (i.e. zeta potential (ζ)) informing on particle repulsion potential and stability, as well as particle 130 size distribution (PSD) are known to be important parameters governing removal mechanisms of fine particles (Sansalone and Kim, 2008). PSD and ζ were thus analysed for water samples collected at the 131 beginning of the experiment in the flume. PSD was analysed with a laser particle size analyser 132 133 (Mastersizer 2000, Malvern Instrument). ζ was measured with a ZetaPhoremeter IV (CAD instrumentations, France) after the sample was left to settle in a container. Only supernatant containing 134 135 the smallest particles left in suspension was analysed. All measurements were at least conducted in 136 duplicate.

137 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sediments LOI was 24.5%, reflecting a relatively high organic content for highway runoff. This may result from the presence of a large vegetated detention zone (15-35 m length) through which runoff has to flow before reaching the permanent pool, contributing to organic input. Sediments' size used in this experiment ranged from 0.8 to 409 µm with 2 main groups characterized by modal diameters of around 40 and 190 µm (Fig. 2b). D₅₀ and D₉₀ of the size distribution were 41 and 206 µm which are within 143 observed ranges for urban runoff (Charters et al., 2015). Fraction lower than 20 μ m is not easily removed 144 by quiescent settling (Sansalone and Kim, 2008) implying that ~26% of the sediments used in the 145 present experiment (corresponding to particles <20 μ m) would remain in suspension especially under 146 dynamic conditions. Median ζ of non-settleable particles was -14mV with an interquartile range of 23 147 mV (Fig. 2a), suggesting potential for particles repulsion and therefore relative stability.

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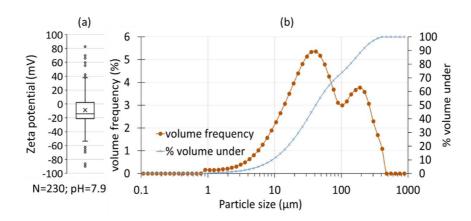


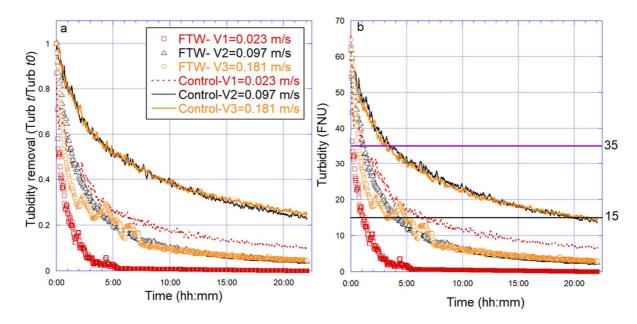


Fig. 2 Sediments zeta potential (a) and particle size distribution (b) sampled at the beginning of the
flume experiment

152 Flume tests performed with the inclusion of the FTW showed faster and greater turbidity reduction than 153 the Control tests (Fig.3). Water column turbidity decreased more rapidly in presence of a FTW 154 (REFTW=97% for V1, 79% for V2 and 78% for V3 after 5hours) than without (RE_{Control}=74% for V1, 47% 155 for V2 and 48% for V3 after 5hours) (Fig. 3a). Even under high flow velocity (V3), inducing the roots to 156 flatten under the mat, the FTW provided an efficient physical filter through particle entrapment into its 157 roots' network as shown by the faster and greater turbidity reduction at V3 in presence of FTW compared 158 to the Control. The presence of the FTW increased turbidity reduction by up to 37%, 34% and 45% 159 (maximum of AddREt over a 22h run) for V1, V2 and V3, respectively, compared to the Control. This is 160 in accordance with Maxwell et al. (2020) who observed that FTW inclusion into a stormwater retention 161 pond induced 10 to 45 % TSS reduction relative to a Control pond. Depending on the flow velocity, these 162 greater reductions were observed 2:06 to 6:13 (h:mm) after the start of the runs.

The turbidity reduction trends were relatively similar for V2 and V3 (Fig. 3). This suggests that V2 and V3 were above the critical flow velocity inducing hydraulic conditions under which turbidity could not decrease further, emphasizing the limit of both systems (flume with and without FTW) in terms of particles removal. Higher turbidity fluctuations were observed in presence of the FTW for V3 especially between 2:00 and 7:30 (Fig. 3). This is most probably due to the observed roots' movement which was 168 greater under this higher velocity (0.181 m/s) inducing either some partial particles release from the 169 roots or lower temporary particle entrapment efficiency.

At flow velocity of 0.023 m/s (V1), threshold for good (35) and very good (15) water quality status 170 (European Parliament, 2000) were reached at t0+00:09 and t0+01:04, respectively, with FTW and 171 172 t0+1:11 and t0+6:35, respectively, without FTW (Fig. 3b). The presence of the FTW thus reduced by 173 1:02 and 5:31 (h:mm) the time needed to reach good and very good water quality status. At V2, 174 thresholds for good (35) and very good (15) water guality status were reached about 2:20 and 15:00 175 (h:mm) earlier, respectively, with FTW. At V3, these thresholds were reached about 2:30 and 16h35 176 (h:mm) earlier with inclusion of the FTW, for good (35) and very good (15) water quality status, 177 respectively.



178

179 Fig. 3 Relative turbidity removal (turbidity at t/turbidity at t0) (a) and Turbidity (FNU) over time (b) in the 180 flume equipped with a FTW and without (Control) under 3 different flow velocities (V1, V2 and V3) 181 Over the 22h flume experiments, water had the opportunity to complete a specific number of successive 182 cycles, respective to each flow velocity (V1, V2 and V3) in the 4.9m long flume. These numbers of cycles 183 are representative of various travelling distances into a pond equipped with a FTW covering 16% of the 184 travelled distance. Turbidity removal efficiency solely induced by FTW inclusion (AddRE=RE_{FTW}-185 RE_{Control}) over the experiment running time can thus be extrapolated to AddRE depending on the number 186 of successive cycles or equivalent pond length (Fig. 4). Such extrapolation necessitates that the 187 conditions prevailing in the pond be similar to those in the present flume experiment, especially 188 favourable hydraulic conditions limiting short circuiting and promoting the water to flow through the FTW

roots' network. In such instance, for a 50m long pond, the inclusion of a 8m long FTW (=16% of pond length), covering 70% of pond width, could improve turbidity removal efficiency by ~32% at low flow velocity (V1=0.023m/s) and by ~10% at medium and high flow velocities (V2 and V3) (Fig. 4, purple lines).

193 Under V1, the additional effect of the FTW would be reduced for ponds greater than ~70m as shown by 194 the decreasing AddRE (although still remaining above 15%, Fig. 4 a). This might be induced by 195 increasing settling processes in larger ponds (>70m) providing longer residence time for settlement, 196 therefore reducing additional particles treatment benefits provided by the FTW. For higher flow velocities 197 (V2 and V3) more representative of high average recurrence interval storm events or flash flood events, 198 such a decrease was not observed for pond length up to 400m. This suggests that, under high flow 199 velocities (>V2), settling processes would be limited even in large sedimentation ponds, warranting 200 inclusion of FTWs as supported by increasing additional turbidity removal efficiency (AddRE) solely 201 induced by the inclusion of a FTW (Fig. 4 b and c). Indeed, while sedimentation processes would be 202 limited, FTWs would provide additional particles' treatment through entrapment in roots' network.

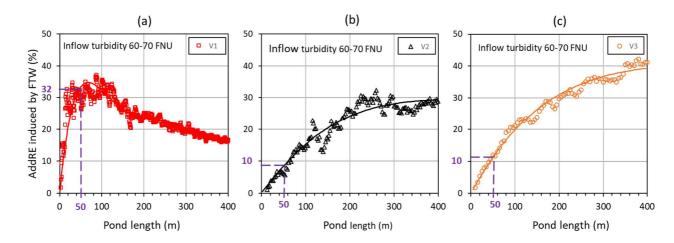


Fig. 4 Estimated additional turbidity removal efficiency (AddRE) (%) solely induced by the inclusion of
 a FTW converging 16% and 70% of pond length and width respectively, under flow velocity V1=0.023
 m/s (a), V2=0.097m/s (b) and V3=0.181 m/s (c), for various pond lengths. Purple lines indicate
 estimated AddRE for a 50m long pond under V1, V2 and V3.

203

At the end of a run, particle entrapment was visible in the FTW roots' network (Fig.1 d,e) demonstrating the capability of the roots to filter and trap suspended particles. However, while retrieving the FTW mat from the flume after a 22h run, the sediments easily sloughed off and dispersed into the flume water suggesting that they were not strongly attached to the roots. This is contradictory to field observations of a FTW having been installed for more than 6 months (Borne et al., 2013) whose roots presented firmly attached particles into the sticky roots biofilm. This suggests that, although ζ was negative suggesting electrical repulsion, particles could first impact the roots' network due to flow velocity and formed clusters and/or layers of particles around the roots, which could, over time and in a real case application, become strongly attached into the rhizosphere due to the formation of a denser sticky biofilm favoured by root's exudates and bacterial development.

218 4 CONCLUSION

The results of the present study suggest that the inclusion of a FTW in an open channel loaded with sediments would provide additional sediment removal mechanisms to settlement. Additional turbidity reduction from 34 to 45% could be achieved in presence of a FTW under a flow velocity range of 0.023-0.181 m/s.

223 Even under high flow velocity, inducing the roots to flatten under the mat, the FTW provided an efficient 224 additional particle removal process to settlement, i.e. entrapment of suspended solids into FTW roots' 225 network. Turbidity thresholds for good and very good water quality status (EU guidelines) were reached 226 1:02 and 5:31 (h:mm) faster with the inclusion of a FTW under a flow velocity of 0.023m/s. While direct 227 extrapolation of the present flume experiment results to real case application should be made carefully, 228 estimate of potential turbidity reduction induced by a FTW in ponds of various sizes is thought to provide 229 useful insight on FTW's benefits. In the present experiment a FTW with a dense fibrous roots' network 230 occupying 62% of the flume cross-sectional area was used, inducing a significant ratio of the water to 231 flow through the roots' network promoting particles' entrapment. Providing that similar conditions could 232 be matched in real retention ponds, turbidity removal efficiency solely induced by a FTW covering 16% 233 of a pond length and 70% of pond width could be extrapolated for various pond sizes. As an example, 234 the inclusion of a 8m long FTW in a 50m long pond, with inlet turbidity of 60-70 FNU, could improve 235 turbidity removal efficiency by ~32% at low flow velocity (V1=0.023m/s) and by ~10% at medium and 236 high flow velocities (V2 and V3). At low flow velocity, FTW effect would be less visible as pond length 237 increases above 70m as it would increase potential for settling mechanisms to occur, therefore 238 compensating part of FTW's treatment benefits. This gives an insight of potential turbidity performance 239 improvement by the inclusion of a FTW (covering 16% of pond length and 70% of pond width) for various 240 pond sizes.

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expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not reflect policy or otherwise of supplier.

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