



# Renew Our Waters

*Every choice counts.*

Stormwater is rain or snowmelt and water from things people do, like overwatering the lawn or washing the car on the driveway. This water runs off our properties, into the street and down the storm drain or through the swale conveyance system - picking up pollutants on its way. The water and the pollutants it carries is discharged into local waterways.

Untreated runoff is the biggest threat to our nation's water quality, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Let's make the small, important changes that will reduce that threat and improve water quality and our lives!

## Realize

What touches the ground enters the water

## Grass Swale - "Ditch"

The waterway in front of your home.

A vegetated or grass swale is commonly but inaccurately referred to as a ditch. Unlike ditches, which are designed to carry water away from roadways, a grass swale is specifically designed to promote water soaking into the ground. It functions as a part of your community's stormwater system. A grass swale treats stormwater from individual lots and conveys stormwater downstream to receiving waters. These swales are a part of a regional drainage system that must be protected.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Your municipality welcomes your assistance in efforts to maintain the swale that touches your property. Below are a few ways you can help monitor a swale near your property or in your community.

The swale (ditch) in front of your home is a part of your community's stormwater system - a regional drainage system that must be protected.

- Remove trash or debris and dispose of properly.
- Report offensive color, odor and presence of sludge.
- Report presence of propane, oil, gasoline odor or if surface film is present.
- Report signs of invasive species
- Report presence of standing water in swale or flow velocity is slow and water becomes stagnant.
- Do not dump anything into the swale. This is prohibited by your local municipality, State and Federal Government, unless the appropriate permits are obtained.
- Do not alter the shape of the swale. (Any changes made to the swale in front of your property need prior approval from your municipality.)
- Do not replace the grass with rock, bark, plants or other vegetation other than grass. (Any changes made to the swale in front of your property need prior approval from your municipality.)
- Prevent off-street parking or other activities that may cause rutting or compact the soil in the swale.