



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

RenewOurWaters.org

A Waterway in Your Front Yard

The ditch in front of your home is an important part of a regional drainage system that must be protected.

Ditches, or swales, are often placed along roads and in drainage easements along side/back lot lines as a part of your community's stormwater system. This ditch system treats stormwater from individual lots by encouraging water to sink into the ground, and carries excess stormwater downstream to the nearest creek, stream or river.

WHOSE DITCH IS IT?

Most road side ditches are owned by your municipality, however, side and back lot line ditches may or may not be. Contact your municipality to verify.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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

The 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 natural gas, oil, gasoline odor or if surface film is present.
- Report signs of invasive species
- Report presence of standing water for extended periods of time
- 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.)
- Do not use fertilizers or pesticides in the ditch.
- Prevent off-street parking or other activities that may cause rutting or compact the soil in the swale.

Northeast Wisconsin Stormwater Consortium

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