

What is Stormwater Runoff?

Rain and melting snow that flows off rooftops, streets, lawns, parking lots, and farmland is stormwater runoff.



Stormwater runoff: obtained from istock.com

Stormwater runoff picks up excess fertilizer and pesticides, oil, sand, leaves, grass clippings, and many other pollutants. Unlike sewage, stormwater does not flow into a treatment plant to be cleaned, so it is critical that we all do our part to prevent pollution from getting into stormwater runoff.

Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust, Inc.

About Us

Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust, Inc. (Sweet Water) is committed to restoring the Greater Milwaukee watersheds to conditions that are healthy for swimming and fishing. We bring diverse partners together and provide the leadership and innovation necessary to protect and restore our shared water resources.

Contact Us

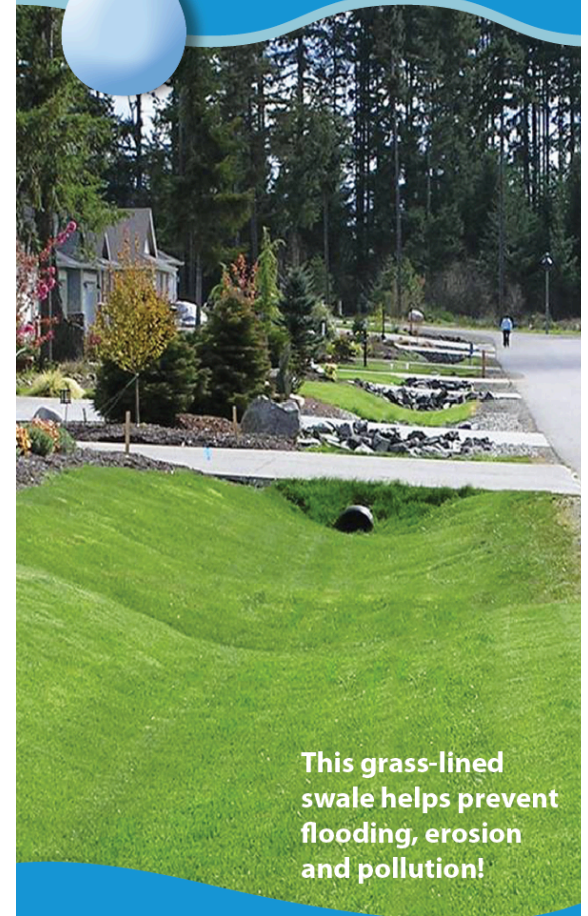
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Ditches and Swales Keep them Clean and Clear



This grass-lined swale helps prevent flooding, erosion and pollution!

Ditches and Culverts: Your Connection to Stormwater Drainage



Did you know that the ditches and culverts you see in your neighborhood are part of a neighborhood-wide storm drainage system? These ditches are designed to reduce flooding, winter-icing, erosion, and pollution caused by fast-moving, contaminated stormwater runoff. Once the runoff enters these ditches, it either infiltrates into the ground, or is conveyed through the neighborhood's ditch system directly into a nearby river, stream, or lake such as Lake Michigan.

• **Culvert: a tunnel carrying stormwater under a driveway, road, or railroad.**

Keep it Clean & Clear

For ditches and culverts to function properly, they must remain “clean and clear” so stormwater runoff can flow unobstructed through the drainage system. Grass-lined ditches are meant to filter and absorb pollutants in the runoff before the water is conveyed to a stormwater pond or nearby surface water.



Easy Ways to Keep it Clean & Clear

• **Take your car to a car wash** • **Pick up pet waste, bag it and trash it** • **Contain automobile fluid leaks** • **Use fewer pesticides and fertilizers** • **Don't fill in!**

Your Ditch & Culvert is a crucial part of the neighborhood

The ditch and culvert near your house is a part of a broader neighborhood network for managing stormwater runoff and reducing flooding, winter icing, erosion, and pollution.

If you fill your portion of the ditch with dirt, plants, or rock, you might affect a neighbor's property, damage the neighborhood, create dangerous roadways, or enable more pollutants to enter a nearby river, stream, or lake such as Lake Michigan.

