



# Stormwater Facilities & Maintenance

## Conveyance Ditches & Swales

Both ditches and swales help to reduce flooding, erosion, and pollution caused by stormwater runoff. Once runoff enters these facilities, it either infiltrates into the ground or is channeled into a nearby stormwater pond or waterbody.

Although swales and ditches are both part of the stormwater conveyance system (and often look similar) – swales are designed more technically, with relatively gentle side slopes and a flat wide bottom.

### Pro Tip:

DO NOT fill a portion of the swale or ditch with yard debris such as branch cuttings or grass clippings, or add rocks or beauty bark. This can cause flooding and damage, and ultimately can cause the stormwater facility to fail.



Swales are planted with grass to filter out sediment and pollution



Ditches quickly move rain off roadways to prevent flooding



Rocked swales (unless permitted) are against Thurston County code

### Maintenance required when:

- Swale or ditch has been modified or filled in
- Trash, debris, or yard waste present in structure
- Excessive vegetation (e.g. grass above 10 inches)
- Grass absent in areas
- Erosion or channeling occurring
- Noxious weeds in or near facility
- Inlet/outlets clogged

### Contact your HOA or property manager immediately if:

- Inlet/outlets blocked
- Structure is flooding
- There is damage from a storm or vandalism
- Evidence of illegal dumping

### Visit us online:

[ThurstonStormwater.org](http://ThurstonStormwater.org)

# Don't let your systems fail.

Maintenance of a dense healthy vegetated cover consists of periodic mowing (2x per year), weed control, reseeding of bare areas, and clearing of debris and accumulated sediment.



Ditches are v-shaped open channels that convey stormwater

Avoid the use of herbicides, fertilizers, and other chemicals in your swales and ditches.



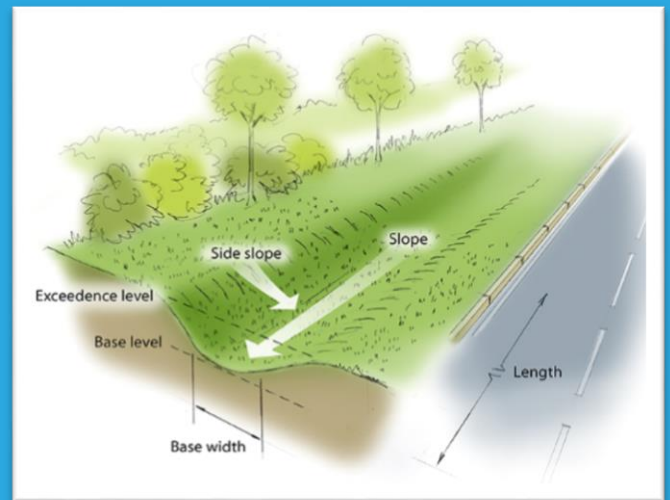
Reseeding of bare areas is recommended to prevent erosion and muddy runoff

## Keep water clean.

## Protect county roads from flooding.

## Save money.

Swales are shallow stormwater facilities located along roadways designed with specific dimensions, soil media, and can also include plants adapted to the local climate and soil moisture conditions. They are designed to perform similar to a forest - controlling stormwater through detention, infiltration, and evapotranspiration. They also provide water quality treatment through sedimentation, filtration, adsorption, and phytoremediation.



Schematic of basic swale design features

For additional information regarding stormwater management in Thurston County, reference our Stormwater Drainage Manual at [DM.ThurstonStormwater.org](http://DM.ThurstonStormwater.org).

Call us with any questions at (360) 754-4681

Join our mailing list @ [Join.ThurstonStormwater.org](http://Join.ThurstonStormwater.org)