



# Residential Grass Swale

## Maintenance and Upkeep Guide

Grass Swales are simply grass lined ditches that convey stormwater away from your yard while infiltrating as much runoff as the underlying soil will allow. The Environmental Stewardship Program (ESP) relies on green-friendly solutions and uses turf reinforcement mats (TRMs) in high flow channels where rock riprap has typically been used. TRMs provide immediate erosion protection and long-term site armoring.

### Benefits of a Grass Swale

- Removes pollutants by filtering and settling.
- Reduces erosion.
- Less expensive than traditional curb and gutter.
- Reduces runoff flows.

### Why is it important to maintain Grass Swales?

Keeping your site clean and doing regular inspections will prolong the life of the swale and ensure that it is functioning properly.

### Need Assistance?

Contact Knox County Stormwater at:

[Stormwater@KnoxCounty.org](mailto:Stormwater@KnoxCounty.org)  
(865) 215-5540



### Grass Swales have minimal maintenance needs:

1. It is best to maintain grass height of at least 3 inches in a swale. Grass cutting equipment should be adjusted to a height to avoid contact with the ground surface. Mowing should not be attempted until the turf is firmly rooted.
2. Mow only when dry. Grass cutting should occur only in dry conditions when the soil will support the weight of the tractor.
3. Remove weeds or nuisance plants manually.
4. Remove sediment build up with a small shovel or rake when it accumulates in the channel bottom.
5. Reseed bare areas.
6. Fill eroded areas and reseed.
7. Remove trash, leaves and debris build up.
8. Use fertilizer as directed and pesticides only when necessary.

