



# SAVE THE SWALES

“Channels that run across your front yard and under your driveway are called swales.”

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAINTAIN YOUR SWALE?

- *Mow the grass in your swale to an acceptable height.*
- *Remove leaves and excess grass clippings.*
- *Install plants away from the swale at least 15 feet from edge of road.*
- *Don't fill in your swale. This reduces its carrying capacity and may cause flooding.*
- *Make sure your driveway allows water to drain towards your swale and downspouts are properly located to not cause erosion along the edge and under your driveway.*
- *Avoid parking vehicles in your swale to allow healthy grass to grow and keep soil loose.*
- *Keep your driveway culvert clear. The Road & Bridge Division can assist with large blockages unless the culvert has failed. A failed culvert cannot be cleared because the pressure of the equipment used may collapse the culvert and driveway.*
- *There is no charge to inspect and clear a blocked culvert. However, it is the homeowner's responsibility to repair failed driveway culverts. If you wish to replace, repair or add to your driveway, you must first apply for a county permit. Please call the Water Quality Division at 772-462-2511 for assistance.*

## BE GOOD TO YOUR SWALE

*The way you treat your swale may be repeated by neighbors who watch what you do and follow your lead. If changes to the swale are done improperly or if maintenance is neglected, drainage problems are further compounded. This hurts the drainage for everyone.*

## REMEMBER:

**STANDING WATER IN YOUR SWALE IS NORMAL...UNLESS THERE IS A BLOCKAGE DOWNSTREAM.**

*It may take days or weeks after a rain before stormwater is absorbed into the ground. Water remains in a swale until the water table subsides enough to absorb the water. Eventually, the remaining water will either evaporate or infiltrate into the soil.*



Culvert failed and swale is blocked by debris supporting the driveway



Clean swale and driveway culvert



Swale filled in with dirt



Driveway culvert blocked with grass

### PURPOSE OF A SWALE

*To Drain: Swales drain lots and roadways to help keep them dry, conveying stormwater to ditches, canals and larger bodies of water. Swales are designed to keep the roadbed above the water table. This makes the road last longer.*

*To Retain: Swales slow the stormwater to allow water to soak into the ground. This also helps replenish wetlands, streams, lakes and ponds.*

*To Treat: Swales allow suspended solids and pollutants to settle out of the water so treatment is provided before it is returned to natural water bodies.*



**If there is a significant amount of standing water in your swale and there has been no rain for several days or weeks, there may be a blockage downstream of your area. This may warrant an investigation by a Stormwater Engineer and a Code Enforcement Officer. Please feel free to call Code Compliance at 772-462-1571.**