

Remember - the way you treat your swale may be repeated in your neighborhood by neighbors following your lead. If changes are done improperly, or maintenance of the swale and its contours is neglected, drainage problems and increased pollution from rainfall runoff will be the result.

Finding more Details...

The City is here to answer your questions and can work with you and your neighborhood association. Please call us at (561) 416-3402.

S.O.S.

*Our City of
Boca Raton
needs your
help to*



Fall 2001



Sending Out a Signal...

The City of Boca Raton is sending out an S.O.S. Our call for help is simple: Save Our Swales. While this tongue-in-cheek distress signal may make you chuckle a bit at first, our message is really quite serious.

Swales are generally defined as the strip of land in front of your homes and adjacent to the street. And although you may never have stopped to think about it before, swales are key to the protection of our environment and the appearance of our neighborhoods.

Defining Their Purpose...

Natural swales provide a drainage area for stormwater that falls on our roads and driveways. They allow the water to filter and percolate into the soil.

That's why swales should be kept grassy. Keeping swales in their natural state also adds to the beauty of our neighborhoods.

Swales paved with asphalt or mounded with dirt, may cause traffic, health and/or aesthetic hazards. Stormwater may collect there, stagnating; or it may run off the surface, picking up pollutants such as oil and chemicals.

Identifying Problems With Runoff...

The contaminated runoff eventually winds up in our canals, rivers and lakes. Stormwater runoff is a primary source of water pollution. In fact, Federal and State legislation has been enacted requiring cities

throughout the country to develop comprehensive stormwater management programs.

Properly maintaining our swales will help us satisfy these requirements and help protect Boca Raton's 77 miles of waterways.

Working Together Toward Solutions...

The City realizes that you may need to make certain changes to your swale. We'd just like you to follow some guidelines that will protect our environment and your neighborhood.

Paving - If you need to pave your swale for driveway access, pave only the section you need and leave the rest of the swale in it's natural state. Remember, pavement is considered to be a permanent structure and requires a construction permit from the City.

Plantings - Landscaping your front swale may be pleasing to the eye, but it does disrupt the natural drainage features of your neighborhood. Installing your plantings behind your property line, away from the road, adds beauty to your home and maintains the swale in it's natural state.

Parking - Avoid continual parking of vehicles on your swale to allow healthy grass to develop and leave the soil loose so water can percolate into the ground.

Driveways - Make sure your driveway's design allows water to drain toward your swale.

Debris - Keep your swale free of leaves, limbs and other vegetation. Properly dispose of debris and oil rather than placing them in your swale.

