



## **Grass or Concrete Swales - Property Owner Responsibilities**

Grass or concrete swales commonly run along the back or side of residential properties. These swales are in place to help facilitate proper storm drainage. They help prevent flooding and damage to your property and your neighbour's. If either you or your neighbour has a swale, you should be aware of the building restrictions related to it, as well as the guidelines related to its maintenance.

### **Responsibilities**

As per Storm Drainage Bylaw 18-13, property owners are responsible for keeping swales located on their property clear of all debris. Swales must not be blocked or restricted in any fashion. Obstructions which are not allowed may include but are not limited to dirt, loam, gravel, plant material, snow, slush, and ice. If you have a swale on your side of the property line, remember that your neighbour behind or beside you must be able to drain their lawn and property to the swale. While these structures should remain clear throughout the year, it is especially important in the late winter and early spring months to remove any snow and ice which has accumulated within swales to help facilitate snow melting and associated runoff.

### **Overland Drainage Right-of-Way**

Swales located on private properties are typically protected by Overland Drainage Right-of-Ways. These right-of-ways extend beyond the limits of the physical swale area. These right-of-ways must also remain free and clear of any obstructions and should also not be altered in any fashion. Alterations not allowed may include, but are not limited to, raising or lowering the grade or ground, planting trees and shrubs within the right-of-way, obstructing the right-of-way, or constructing any structure, such as a shed or retaining walls, within the right-of-way. Failure to maintain the overland drainage right-of-way may result in your swale within the right-of-way not performing as it is intended.

For more information, refer to your Certificate of Title registered against your property to determine if an Overland Drainage Restrictive Covenant applies and familiarize yourself with the responsibilities and obligations pertaining to the overland drainage right-of-way. Additional information pertaining to Bylaw 18-13 may be found on the Town of Okotoks website at [okotoks.ca](http://okotoks.ca) or by calling Operations at 403-938-4372.

