



## MAINTAINING A GRASS CHANNEL

### Taking Care of a Grass Channel

Routine maintenance, such as mowing and removing debris and trash, is needed to keep a grass channel working properly. Annually removing sediment in the channel will help to avoid expensive turf replacement costs.

### To Maintain Your Grass Channel

- ✓ Mow grass regularly to no shorter than 2-1/2 to 3 inches. Remove or compost long grass clippings.
- ✓ Remove litter and debris monthly or after a storm as needed.
- ✓ Prune, weed, water, and mulch the grass channel as needed. Remove invasive species that may inhibit stormwater flow.
- ✓ Remove leaves and bag or compost them as needed. Leaves can smother the grass and prevent infiltration.
- ✓ Maintain the grass cover after heavy storms and as needed. Reseed bare areas and repair eroded areas.
- ✓ Check monthly for rodents and pests that may damage the grass channel.
- ✓ Inspect the facility annually.

*Stormwater runoff is rainfall that moves over paved or impervious surfaces, picking up pollutants like litter, oil, and animal waste along the way to the storm drain system. Stormwater management facilities help to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff before that water reaches the rivers and bays of Virginia Beach. This fact sheet provides information on a specific type of stormwater management facility and how to maintain it.*

### What is a Grass Channel?

A grass channel is a broad, shallow area covered with turf or grass. Grass channels are typically located along the edge of a property, gently sloping toward the storm drain system. They are commonly found along roads, parking lots, or between residential lots. A grass channel is designed to slow stormwater runoff and allow it to filter into the ground. Unlike similar stormwater management facilities like a dry swale, grass channels are not designed with an underlying filter system.



### How Do Grass Channels Work?

Grass channels work primarily by slowing and temporarily storing runoff after it rains. Depending on how permeable the underlying soil is, they may also help filter out pollutants as stormwater soaks into the subsurface.

When maintained properly, grass channels can help provide long-term stormwater quality benefits and protect Virginia Beach's rivers and bays.



## Troubleshooting

Problem	Likely cause	How to fix
Standing water 6 hours or more after a storm	The channel may be clogged with leaves, grass clippings, debris, or sediment.	Remove leaves, grass clippings, debris, and sediment. If the problem persists, you may need to till and replant the surface of the grass channel.
Weeds taking over channel	Established weeds that have already seeded.	Remove weeds, including the roots, as soon as you see them. Do not allow weeds to go to seed. Avoid using herbicides to kill weeds.
Erosion or bare soil	Runoff is moving too fast or the vegetation has died.	Stabilize the soil by planting new grass or using rocks to slow down water movement.



### Virginia Beach Stormwater Management Program

[www.vbgov.com/stormwater-program](http://www.vbgov.com/stormwater-program)

☎ 757-385-4131

✉ [VBstormwater@vbgov.com](mailto:VBstormwater@vbgov.com)

### Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

[www.askhrgreen.org](http://www.askhrgreen.org)

☎ 757-420-8300

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### Virginia Beach Master Gardeners

[www.vbmg.org](http://www.vbmg.org)

☎ 757-385-8156

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### Virginia Stormwater BMP Clearinghouse

[www.swbmp.vwrrc.vt.edu](http://www.swbmp.vwrrc.vt.edu)

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