

Professional Landscaping & Stormwater Management

Best Management Practices

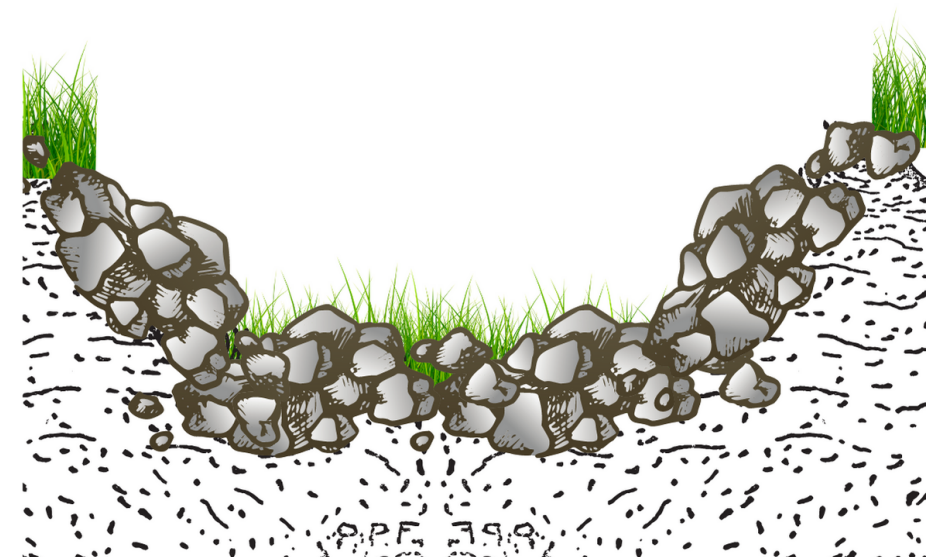
The Breakdown

Landscapes vary in size, purpose and level of development. To control the flow of stormwater runoff, stormwater systems such as catch basins, ditches, ponds, and streams, are important common features throughout Cobb County's landscape. Professionals may be tasked with maintaining the exterior landscape of commercial businesses or multi-residential properties, of which they can be a major part of.

Regular maintenance is key to preventing flooding, blockages and eroded land. Many of these responsibilities can be performed by in-house staff, but are just as often delegated to landscaping contractors. Building a connection line between you and your landscape professional is critical to maintaining the structural integrity of these stormwater structures. It can at times feel daunting, but it doesn't have to be. Check out the talking tips below as we explore two examples of structures, **ditches** and **stream channels**.

Stormwater Ditches

Stormwater ditches are also called culverts or swales. These are typically narrow channels or shallow depressions throughout the landscape, and they're used for drainage alongside low-lying areas, backyards or even some roads. Stormwater ditches are typically vegetated, but they can be lined with rocks.



Ditches help keep water from pooling onto your property. Roadside ditches help drain water away from the driving surface. Vegetation on ditches helps to slow down water, allowing for some absorption into the soil and providing time for pollutants to settle before reaching our streams and creeks. A well-kept ditch is kept clear of trash, debris and overgrown vegetation. If neglected, flow through ditches can be impeded and can result in flooding.

Key Points to communicate

Inspect the ditch

either on your own or with your landscape professional. Inspecting after a large rain storm event will allow you to see if it is draining properly.

Check for obstructions

in the ditch's inflow and outflow structures. Trash, sediment and debris should be removed if observed. If vegetation is overgrown, let your landscapers know that the ditch's embankments need to be mowed.

Clarify proper disposal methods

with your landscaper or assigned staff person. Clippings and other vegetative waste should be bagged and properly disposed of, or composted. If your landscape contractor uses a leaf blower, make sure they don't blow the leaves into the ditch.

If you observe exposed or eroded soil,

you may need to ask your landscape professional to help with reseeding or revegetating the area.

If you observe too much collected sediment,

so much so that it impedes its function, you may need to remove sediment to reestablish the drainage channel, and clear blockages at pipe inlets. In severe cases, you may need the assistance of a qualified stormwater professional.

Stream Channels

Open streams are paths for water to flow between two stream banks. A healthy stream is a habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, so it is vital that we maintain them to promote good water quality. Deep pools of slow moving water and faster riffles containing river rocks and gravel are home to macroinvertebrates and fish.

Healthy streams are at risk of being impacted by an accumulation of pollutants like trash, motor oil and pet waste. Although less obvious, a heavily eroded bank with a lack of vegetation is also an indicator of degraded stream health. Deepened and straight stream channels will increase flow rates and create fast moving water with a lot of destructive force. Instream features like the pools and riffles will be lost.

The path of the stream channel in the image to the right is being obstructed by excess vegetation.



Key Points to communicate

Inspect the stream

either on your own or with your landscape professional. Inspecting a stream after a large rain storm event will allow you to see if it is draining properly.

Keep streambanks natural.

Protect the stream channel by clearing out accumulated debris. Ask your landscaper or assigned staff person to avoid dumping yard waste on the stream banks or other places where it can be picked up and washed away during high flow events.

If you observe mild streambank damage,

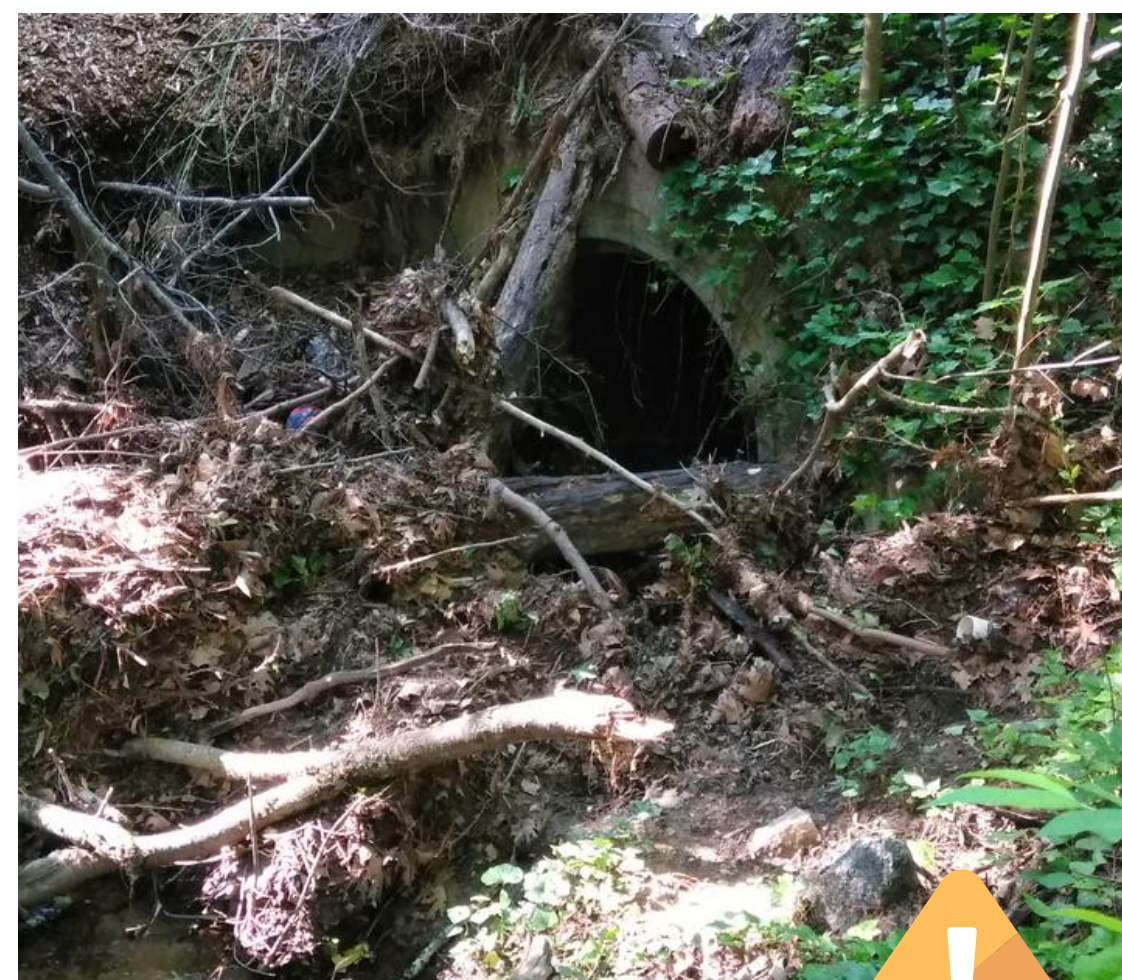
you may be able to prevent it from worsening. Speak with your landscape professional about stabilizing the banks with rock, followed by some appropriate plantings.

If your stream channel is severely damaged,

you may need the help of a certified storm water professional.

Emphasize keeping a vegetated stream buffer

of about 25 to 50 feet with landscape professional. Lawns that end right at the edge of a stream bank can lead to serious erosion, loss of both property and habitat for local wildlife.



The images above illustrate control structures obstructed by leaves, sediment and branches.

Have a catch basin, a detention pond or a retention pond?

Catch basins (shown in the two examples on the right), detention ponds and retention ponds are also examples of stormwater structures. To listen to a episode or view an infographic that focuses these topics, please visit www.cobbcounty.gov/cphs.



Get Help!

Cobb County Stormwater Management

(770) 419-6435

Community Partners for Healthy Streams

(770) 419-6303

Cobb County Storm Drain Marking Program

(770) 419-6431