

South Fork Kent Creek Watershed:
Rural Best Management Practices

Grassed Waterways

Grassed waterways, either natural or constructed, are shaped or graded channels that are planted with suitable vegetation for runoff conveyance without causing channel erosion. (EPA 2018).

Benefits:

- ✓ Conveys runoff from terraces, diversions, and other water concentrations without flooding or erosion
- ✓ Prevents gully formation
- ✓ Protects and improves water quality
- ✓ Provide wildlife habitat, corridor connections, and vegetative diversity



Clean Water Iowa



NRCS Wisconsin

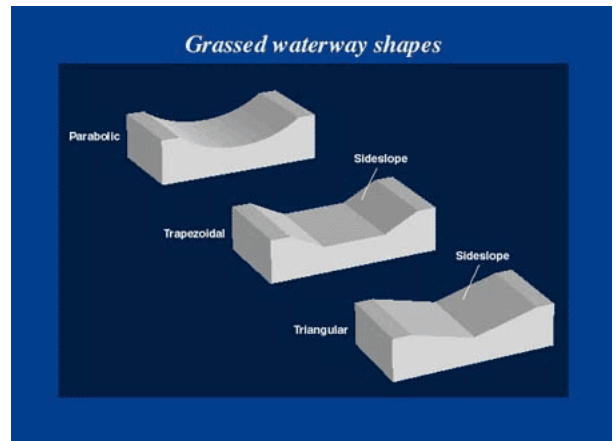
With a life span of ten years, some waterways are maintained and improved each year. Existing grassed waterways within the watershed can be improved in order to handle larger storm events. The watershed-based plan will recognize the efforts being taken to maintain these grassed waterways, and implementation projects may include match funding for repairs.



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When designing grassed waterways, one must consider slope, vegetative cover, soil conditions and erodibility, channel shape and maintenance (US EPA Agricultural Management Practices for Water Quality Protection). Generally farmers use one of three grassed waterway shapes: parabolic, trapezoidal, or triangular. Many favor the parabolic shape as it is the shape naturally taken in watercourses, an easier shape to visualize and build, and easiest shape to cross with farm equipment. However, small water flows are less likely to meander in parabolic waterways (University of Illinois Extension).



University of Illinois Extension, This Land



When initially installing grassed waterways, it is important to allow for grassed vegetation to establish in order for it to withstand the water velocities it is designed to accommodate. To aid in this process, side diversions can be installed along the sides of the waterway to keep flow out of the channel. Once grass has established, these diversions should be removed. Alternatively, one may utilize rock/fabric checks or mulching.

Conservation Practice Standard:
Grassed Waterway, **Code 412**

