

Benefits of Good Drainage

- Absorbs Stormwater Runoff
- Reduces the chance of Water-Borne diseases
- Inhibit water damage to public roads
- Good Drainage allows plant roots to receive enough oxygen to mature properly.
- Allows the soil to absorb and store more rainfall, which reduces runoff from the soil surface that causes soil erosion.
- Good Drainage increases the number of days available for planting & harvesting crops.
- Drainage can increase soil surface temperatures that help seeds germinate.
- Drainage helps plants grow their roots deeper into the soil so they can absorb more nutrients and water from the soil.



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DRAINAGE,

AN ESSENTIAL UTILITY



LANDOWNERS'

RIGHTS

DRAINAGE RIGHTS

Drainage History

In the 1800s, farmers dug man-made ditches for the sole purpose of turning unproductive swampland into lush, fertile farm ground. The same valuable farmland generations of agriculture producers have farmed to earn a living and feed the world.

These man-made ditches today serve the same purpose of draining storm runoff as they have for centuries. The only difference is some ditches drain acres of farmland and others drain miles of concrete.

Our ancestors understood that drainage is an essential utility. To cover the inadequacies of the natural drainage rules and to give landowners a means of securing proper drainage, the Illinois Drainage laws were established.

Law of Natural Drainage

The most important principle of Illinois drainage law is the owner of lower ground must receive surface water that naturally flows from higher ground.

Landowners have the right to improve drainage on his or her property.

Landowners Can:

- Widen, Deepen, and clean natural waterway that carry their surface water
- Straighten out channels on their own property
- Accelerate the movement of surface water as long as they do not change the natural point of entry on the lower land
- Drain ponds or standing water in the directions of their runoff.
Caution: You cannot drain designated isolated wetlands.
- Fill up ponds or low places where water may stand, and force water out into natural drainage channels.
- Construct grass waterways, check dams, terraces, or soil-conservation structures.
- Tile their property to expedite the flow of water. So Long as they do not:
 - Unreasonably increase flow
 - Change the point of entry on lower land
 - Bring in water from another watershed
 - Connect their tile to tile of another landowner or drainage district without consent
- To legally form a drainage district

Landowners Cannot:

- Dam or obstruct a natural channel so that the flow of surface water from higher land is impeded or blocked
- Divert water to lands that do not naturally receive this drainage
- Change the point of entry on lower land
- Bring water from another watershed that would not naturally flow across the lower land
- Pollute any waters that pass from their land through property of others
- Connect their own tile with another landowner's or a drainage district's without consent
- Dam up or impound large bodies of water that escapes and cause serious damage to the lower land
- Accelerate the flow of water unreasonably, or malice intent to damage the lower land

Information was collected from the Illinois Drainage Law Circular 1305, University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Services