

Preserving the landscape of our beautiful Sonoran desert has always been important to the City of Scottsdale. In the northern areas of the city, where so much of the natural beauty is still intact, the city prefers to keep washes in their natural state rather than building concrete lined stormwater channels and other manmade structures. This preserves the native plants and wildlife residing within.

Maintaining natural washes brings its own series of challenges. Overgrown desert plants, dead vegetation or improperly discarded waste material can block the watercourses and obstruct the flow of stormwater. Residents will sometimes add fill when developing or improving their homes or build walls or fences across washes, which similarly impedes the flow of water.

Blocking washes can create serious damage and put people in danger. Because we live in a desert, our infrequent rains can be heavy and sudden, causing flash flooding. Obstructions within the wash can send stormwater outside of their natural paths, causing erosion, flooding buildings and creating hazardous conditions for the residents living and working in the area.

Consequently, the city must work with residents to minimize these risks. The city's wash systems must be maintained to reduce the risk of flooding for Scottsdale residents, but maintenance work needs to comply with the city's ordinances for protecting natural open spaces, environmentally sensitive areas and native plants.



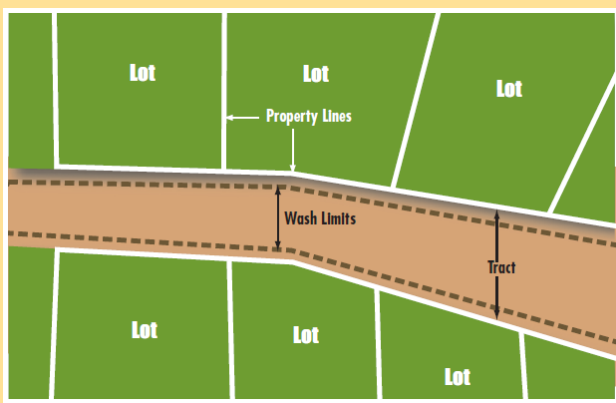
## Who is responsible for maintaining washes?

- Homeowners, not the city, are responsible for maintaining the portion of a wash that is on their property.
- The city is responsible for maintaining washes on city-owned property, such as those in city parks or street crossings.

## What part of the wash are homeowners responsible?

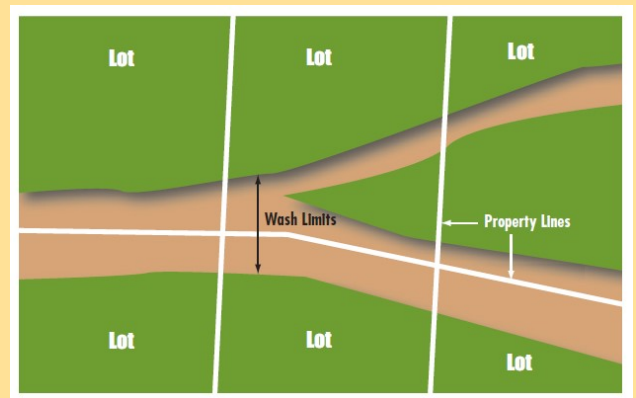
For residential properties, there are two typical ownership patterns related to washes.

### Wash is located in a separate tract of land



Typically in areas owned by a homeowner's association and in larger subdivisions or master planned communities. The homeowner's association or the owner of the tract is responsible for maintenance of the washes within the tract.

### Wash is within an individual parcel



Usually among parcels created by lot splits and in smaller or older residential subdivisions. In these situations, washes are located near property lines to maximize the developable area of the lot. Each lot owner is responsible for the portion of the wash located within their property.

To view your property's wash boundaries, visit the city's Land Information Web Map Application at <http://eservices.scottsdaleaz.gov/maps>. Type in your address and zoom in to the aerial image.

## What should homeowners do (or not do) to maintain their portion of the wash?

The goal of wash maintenance is to remove obstructions that significantly reduce the ability of washes to convey storm flows, particularly in areas where houses and other structures could be flooded. This is accomplished by removing debris, weeds, and overgrowth while observing the city's environmental protection ordinances and requirements.



**Homeowners should inspect washes crossing their property at least annually and after any storm that produces flow within the washes.**

### Wash Maintenance & Improvements

Some wash maintenance and improvements may require city review and approval. Please contact Scottsdale's Planning and Development Dept. prior to starting any work including:

- Working in areas designated as Natural Area Open Space
- Maintaining historic grades
- Using motorized equipment
- Realigning or filling the wash
- Reinforcing banks with materials such as riprap or rock lining
- Adding a fence or wall in the vicinity of the wash

Discussing your project with Planning & Development staff first will help preserve the natural desert environment and minimize the environmental impact.



### Helpful Resources

Visit [ScottsdaleAZ.gov](http://ScottsdaleAZ.gov) and search the following terms for additional information.

**Wash Maintenance**  
Search "Wash Ownership"

**Native Plants**  
Search "Native Plant Ordinance"

**Invasive Plant List**  
Search "Invasive Plants"

**Natural Area Open Space**  
Search "ESL Overlay"