



# **GWINNETT COUNTY** STORMWATER UTILITY

Protect Water Quality and Save money

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## About the Stormwater Utility

Impervious surfaces such as rooftops and paved driveways prevent stormwater from soaking into the ground and cause it to run off faster. This can increase the volume of trash and pollutants being carried to streams. The Gwinnett County Stormwater Utility provides stormwater control measures that can help manage this runoff, while also reducing the amount of pollution carried by stormwater to Gwinnett's waterways.

To fund construction, maintenance, and repair of the stormwater system in Gwinnett County, a Stormwater Utility Fee is collected from property owners. These fees are based on the amount of impervious surface area on each parcel of land.

## Stormwater Utility Fee Credits

Property owners who take actions to limit the amount of stormwater that leaves their properties and/or clean pollutants from the runoff can earn credits that will lower their Stormwater Utility Fee.

This document outlines several activities property owners can take to reduce their fees. Detailed information, including the application form, can be found in the Stormwater Credits Manual on the Gwinnett County website at [GwinnettStormwater.com](http://GwinnettStormwater.com).

Credits are available in two areas: Watershed Stewardship and Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs). The total maximum credit for any property is 40%. Once credits are processed, they are applied to the Stormwater Utility Fee on the property tax bills.

All maps that are referenced can be found on the County's GIS Data Browser:  
<https://gis.gwinnettcountry.com/GISDataBrowser/WebPages/Map/FundyViewer.aspx>

## Watershed Stewardship Credit Opportunities

Watershed Stewardship credits are awarded to property owners who take action to protect the watershed, make efforts to learn about or increase public awareness about watershed management. Property owners can earn up to 40% credit under

the Watershed Stewardship category and the combined 40% can be obtained from more than one practice. Please note that 40% is the maximum credit allowed for any property. Property owners should check to make certain that their actions will not violate any local (municipal and homeowners association regulations).

## Public Participation

A 5% credit is available if at least one person from a residential parcel spends four hours per year participating in an activity like stenciling storm drains, participating in a stream cleanup project, or attending and passing an Adopt-a-Stream training course. Contact Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful at 770.822.5187 to have an application and certificate of participation completed. Email [DWRInfo@GwinnettCounty.com](mailto:DWRInfo@GwinnettCounty.com) for more information on these activities.

## County Approved Workshops and Training Programs

Residential property owners may earn a 5% credit once per year if at least one person in the household learns how they can improve water quality or reduce stormwater runoff by attending an approved workshop or training program.

To register, call 678.376.7193 option 5 or email [DWRWorkshops@GwinnettCounty.com](mailto:DWRWorkshops@GwinnettCounty.com) with your name, address and telephone number, or register online at <https://www.gwinnettcountry.com/portal/gwinnett/Departments/PublicUtilities/WaterConservation/PublicEducation/WorkshopsRegistration>

## Conservation Easements

Property owners who have permanently protected land in a predominately natural state by means of a conservation easement donated to a land trust or government entity can receive up to a 30% credit for 5 years (maximum of 10 years). The credit is based on the amount of property placed in the conservation easement. When submitting an application, include a copy of the recorded conservation easement that has been established along with a survey or tax map showing the size and location of the protected area.



## **Conservation Use Valuation Assessment (CUVA) Properties**

Owners of agricultural land, timberland, or environmentally sensitive land that have qualified for a conservation use assessment status may earn a 10% credit.

*Submit documentation indicating CUVA designation with the application for credit tax status designation from the Tax Assessor's Office. For more information, contact the Gwinnett County Tax Assessor's Office at 770.822.7200.*

## **Low Impact Parcels**

Properties with minimal impervious surfaces (7% or less of the total property area) qualify for up to 30% credit for five years.

The credit amounts are as follows:

- 5% or less impervious is eligible for a 30% credit.
- 5.01% - 6% impervious is eligible for a 20% credit.
- 6.01% - 7% impervious is eligible for a 10% credit.

*Include a site map showing or printed map from the County's GIS Data Browser the entire property and all hard surfaces.*

## **Rain Barrels**

Rain barrels collect rainwater from rooftops and are usually located under downspouts. Property owners must connect each downspout to a separate rain barrel (minimum size of 50 gallons) in order to receive up to a 3% credit. If all of the downspouts are not connected, partial credit is earned. Dry wells and underground perforated pipe (minimum 50 feet of 6 inch pipe) may be used as well.

*Include date-stamped photographs of installed barrels (or alternatives) and a site map showing location of all rain barrels, dry wells, etc.*

## **Automatic Sprinkler Sensors**

Property owners who install sensors to prevent automatic sprinklers from operating during rain events can earn a 10% credit for a single one-year term after installing the sensors.

*Include photos & documentation that the system has been installed and is functioning properly. New installations eligible only.*

## **Residential Rain Gardens**

Residential Rain Gardens are boggy low spots in the landscape, planted with appropriate native vegetation. Rain gardens collect stormwater runoff and allow it to soak into the ground.

*When submitting a rain garden application, include date-stamped photos, a site plan showing the size and location of the facility, and a report explaining how much hard surface area drains to it. The report should include a list of the types of plants used.*

## **Farmland Deep Tillage**

Farmers who till their land at least 18 inches deep can receive up to a 10% credit for 5 years.

*Include a site map showing the entire property and areas that have been deep tilled along with a statement stating when the land was deep tilled and certifying that the land was deep tilled to a depth of at least 18 inches and in rows no more than three (3) feet apart.*

## **Fencing Livestock Out of Stream**

Property owners with livestock can improve stream quality by installing fencing that prevents their livestock from accessing streams along their properties. A 5% credit can be earned by land owners who install and maintain fencing to accomplish this.

*Include a site map or printed map from the County's GIS Data Browser showing the location of the stream and fencing, along with any other supporting material.*

## **Stream Restoration / Streambank Stabilization**

Credit for these practices that improve the physical condition of streams are based on the amount of streambank repaired. Designs must be prepared by professionals (usually an engineer or landscape architect). The maximum credit is 30% per year for 10 years.

*Submit the Gwinnett County permit number for the Stream Restoration / Streambank Stabilization project and a Certificate of Completion from the Development Inspections Division. For more information, call 678.376.6700 and ask to speak with someone in the Watershed Improvement Project Group.*



### Stream Buffers that Exceed Local Standards

Property owners can receive 5% or 10% credit for stream buffers that exceed the local requirements as defined in the Stream Buffer Ordinance of Gwinnett County. The maximum width used to determine buffer credit is 300 feet from the stream bank.

*Include a site map or a printed map from the County's GIS Data Browser showing the established and recorded easement. More info found on website: <https://www.gwinnettcounty.com/static/departments/publicutilities/pdf/SBA2005-001B.pdf>.*

### Watershed Improvement Project Participation

Property owners who donate easements for construction and access for these projects constructed by Gwinnett County can receive up to 10% credit for a single five-year term.

*Contact the Department of Water Resources at [DWRBMPCredits@GwinnettCounty.com](mailto:DWRBMPCredits@GwinnettCounty.com) if interested in determining if a project has been identified for any particular property.*

### Direct Discharges

Property owners who live on or near the county border and whose stormwater runoff does not flow through any State stream, stormwater pipe, road, or facility that is owned, operated, or maintained by Gwinnett County qualify for a 40% credit.

*Include a site map or printed map from the County's GIS Data Browser showing the location of the property, adjacent roads, and where stormwater flows.*

### Septic Tank Maintenance

Property owners who have their septic tanks pumped out may earn a 10% credit for five years from the date of service.

*Include a receipt or paid invoice (dated and addressed from a licensed septic hauler) with the application.*

### Connection to Sanitary Sewers

Property owners who currently utilize septic tanks (or other on-site systems) will qualify for a one time 40% credit for the first year after connecting to a sanitary sewer. This credit is not renewable.

*Include documentation from a plumber that the on-site system has been decommissioned and a Department of Water Resources invoice showing the connection fee has been paid.*

### Non-Residential School Watershed Education Curriculum

Eligible non-residential educational institutions that instruct or promote stormwater topics in support of the County's stewardship goals may earn up to 40% credit per billing year. This credit must be renewed annually.

*Eligible institutions will be considered for credits by teaching a watershed education curriculum. Childcare centers, day cares, and Pre-K programs must be licensed and registered with the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (<http://dec.al.ga.gov/>).*

### Best Management Practice (BMP)

#### Credit Opportunities

Stormwater BMP credits are awarded to properties with permitted Stormwater BMPs designed to provide one or a combination of three functions: water quality (includes runoff reduction), channel protection, and/or peak flow reduction. A property can earn up to 30% BMP credit, and partial credit is available. Single-family residential property owners will find Watershed Stewardship credits most applicable to their property. Nonresidential properties are most likely to have eligible Stormwater BMPs, so typically only these properties are eligible for these credits. However, homeowners may also earn these credits if their private BMPs are retrofitted and permitted through Gwinnett County Planning and Development:

- Rainwater Harvesting: Cisterns are containers that collect rain water and are typically connected to roof downspouts.
- Stormwater Ponds: Private water quality facilities contained on a single-family residential parcel (e.g., a wet detention pond) can be retrofitted to modern engineering standards and permitted through Planning and Development.



BMPs must pass county engineering review and site inspection to be eligible for credit. A complete list of eligible BMP types and additional application requirements can be found in the Credits Manual.

**More information on Stormwater Utility Fee Credits can be found in the Credits Manual on the Stormwater Utility page of the website.**

**To apply for stormwater credits:**

- Complete a county-approved watershed stewardship activity
- Fill out a credit application - available on the website as a PDF
- Return application and any required documentation to:

**Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources**

c/o GIS Inventory and Billing Team

684 Winder Highway

Lawrenceville, GA 30045-5012

Or email: [DWRBMPCredits@GwinnettCounty.com](mailto:DWRBMPCredits@GwinnettCounty.com)