



# Stormwater Credits Introduction and Directions

Updated July 30, 2014

Gwinnett County has implemented a stormwater utility to improve customer service, reduce the number of stormwater maintenance and construction projects waiting to be done, and respond to stream water quality and channel erosion needs. Impervious surfaces such as rooftops and paved driveways prevent stormwater from soaking into the ground, and cause it to run off faster while washing fertilizer, oil, and other chemicals into our streams. To help deal with these problems property owners fund utility maintenance and operation activities through user fees based on the amount of impervious surface area on each parcel of land.

Property owners who take actions to limit the amount of stormwater that leaves their properties or clean pollutants from the runoff can earn credits for these actions that will lower their stormwater service fees.

Gwinnett County has identified several actions listed on the following pages that 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 [www.gwinnettstormwater.com](http://www.gwinnettstormwater.com) or by calling stormwater management at 678-376-7193 (option #4) or emailing [SWservice@gwinnettcounty.com](mailto:SWservice@gwinnettcounty.com).

**Four Credit Categories are available: Watershed Stewardship, Water Quality, Peak Flow and Channel Protection. The total maximum credit for any property is 40%.**

## ***Watershed Stewardship Credits (Credits Manual page 6)***

### ***Public Participation***

Up to 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 & passing an Adopt-a-Stream training course.

*Include a certificate of participation with the application.*

### ***Low Impact Parcels***

Property owners with minimal impervious surfaces (less than 5% of their total property area) can qualify for a 30% credit. Properties with impervious areas from 5% up to 6% earn a 20% credit, and properties with impervious areas from 6% up to 7% earn a 10% credit.

*Include a drawing showing the entire property and all hard surfaces, or a map printed from <http://gis.gwinnettcounty.com/OnPointWebsite/WebPages/Map/FundyViewer.aspx>*

### ***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 drawing showing the entire property and areas that have been deep tilled.*

### ***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). It assumes that each 150 square feet of streambank that is repaired will offset 100 square feet of impervious surface. The maximum credit is 30% for 10 years.

*Approval prior to construction is necessary. Provide a drawing showing proposed repaired areas and documentation.*

### ***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 Gwinnett County Stormwater Management Division if interested in determining if a project has been identified for any particular property.*

### ***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 10% credit for 10 years. The credit is based on the amount of property placed in the conservation easement and assumes that each 900 square feet of conservation easement will offset 100 square feet of impervious surface.

*When submitting an application, include a drawing showing the size and location of the easement area or a map printed from <http://gis.gwinnettcounty.com/OnPointWebsite/WebPages/Map/FundyViewer.aspx> along with copy of the recorded conservation easement has been established.*

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

Owners of agricultural land, timberland and environmentally sensitive land that have qualified for a conservation use assessment status earn up to a 10% credit for a maximum of 10 years. It assumes that each 900 square feet of complying land will offset 100 square feet of impervious surface.

*Include documentation that a CUVA designation has been established and its size.*

### ***County Approved Training Programs***

Similar to Public Participation, residential property owners earn credit up to a 5% credit 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 training program. Call 678-376-7126 or email [dwrSWreg@gwinnettcounty.com](mailto:dwrSWreg@gwinnettcounty.com) with your name, address and telephone number.

*Attendance sign-in list is verified against the application.*

### ***Stream Buffers That Exceed 75' Standards***

Property owners who use an easement to dedicate portions of their property as stream buffers (naturally vegetated areas along stream banks) beyond the required 75' buffer can receive up to a 10% credit for 10 years. It assumes that each 900 square feet of buffer will offset 100 square feet of impervious surface.

*When submitting an application, include a drawing showing the location of the buffer along with a copy of the recorded easement that created the buffer.*

### ***Fencing Livestock Out Of Streams***

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

*When submitting an application, include a drawing showing the location of the stream and fencing, along with any other supporting material.*

### ***Rain Barrels***

Rain barrels collect rainwater from rooftops and are usually located under downspouts. Each downspout must be connected 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. Cisterns, dry wells and underground perforated pipe may be used as well. (See also Water Quality Credits/Cistern).

*Include photographs of installed barrels and a drawing or map printed from <http://gis.gwinnettcounty.com/OnPointWebsite/WebPages/Map/FundyViewer.aspx> showing the location of all rain barrels, cisterns, dry wells, etc.*

### ***Automatic Sprinkler Sensors***

Property owners who install sensors to prevent automatic sprinklers from operating during rain events 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.*

### ***Direct Discharges***

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

*Include a drawing or map printed from <http://gis.gwinnettcounty.com/OnPointWebsite/WebPages/Map/FundyViewer.aspx> showing the location of the property and where stormwater flows.*

### ***Septic Tank Maintenance***

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

*Include a receipt 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 40% credit for one year after they connect to a sanitary sewer.

*Include documentation from a plumber that the on-site system has been decommissioned.*

### **Water Quality Credits (Credits Manual page 23)**

Water Quality credits of up to 10% are earned by property owners who install facilities that capture pollutants, thereby providing treatment of stormwater before it enters streams. There are several practices to accomplish this available to all property owners. Porous pavement, roof gardens and green roofs are acceptable practices to receive this credit. Residential property owners can install rain gardens and/or cisterns to earn this credit.

*Approved engineering plans are required prior to construction.*

***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. Homeowners who construct rain gardens can receive up to a 10% credit for five years.

*When submitting an application, include photos & a site plan showing the size and location of the rain garden, along with a report explaining how much hard surface area drains to the rain garden.*

***Cisterns*** are containers that collect rain water and are typically connected to roof downspouts. Eligible cisterns are containers that are capable of storing a volume of rainwater equal to the amount of runoff generated by a 1.2 inch storm event on the impervious area connected to the cistern. It is an up to 10% credit for five years.

*When submitting an application, include photos & a site plan showing the size and location of the cistern, along with a report explaining how much hard surface area drains into it. You can make a map from <http://gis.gwinnettcounty.com/OnPointWebsite/WebPages/Map/FundyViewer.aspx>*

### **Channel Protection Credits (Credits Manual page 28)**

This credit is earned by property owners who provide protection of stream channels from bank and stream bed erosion by detaining and reducing the volume of stormwater from their properties. The maximum credit is 10%.

*Approved engineering plans are required prior to construction.*

### **Peak Flow Credits (Credits Manual page 29)**

This credit is earned by property owners who install basins that delay the highest flows from reaching the drainage system, thereby protecting downstream properties. The maximum credit is 10%.

*Approved engineering plans are required prior to construction.*

Detailed information, including application forms, on all of these credits, can be found in the Stormwater Credits Manual on the Gwinnett County website at [www.gwinnettstormwater.com](http://www.gwinnettstormwater.com) and then click on Stormwater Utility.