



Stormwater Utility Fee

Residential Credit Manual

Introduction

Stormwater runoff is the snow melt or rain that runs off the ground, is collected in ditches and storm drains, and is eventually carried away by Town Run or one of several other tributaries that flow through our City. In rural areas, forests and grasslands slow this water, allowing it to be absorbed by the soil and taken up by the roots of plants. In urban areas, streets, sidewalks, and rooftops cause stormwater to runoff more quickly, preventing the water from entering the soil and creating more runoff. This can lead to increases in standing water and lead to nuisance flooding. In addition to

the impacts from stormwater flows, there are also impacts from increased pollutants. As stormwater flows from our lawns, roof tops, and streets, pollutants such as sediment, oils, grease, fertilizers, pet waste, and litter, are picked up and carried to our streams, rivers, and, eventually, the Chesapeake Bay. To protect these natural resources and minimize the effects this runoff has on our quality of



life, a proactive approach to managing our stormwater is needed to improve the quality and reduce the overall volume of runoff.

Stormwater Utility Fee

Management of stormwater and maintenance of the systems through which stormwater flows is funded through the Stormwater Utility. The Stormwater Utility Fee has been established as a stable and adequate funding source, which is imperative for the Utility to provide the associated services. The fee is equitably distributed among all property owners and is based on the amount of



impervious area contained on a given parcel. Under provisions of the State law, such funds may only be used to pay for, or recover costs associated with the management of stormwater. State regulations do not provide for exemptions for properties or uses. The City has, however, included provisions through which credits may be obtained to reduce the fee associated with an individual parcel or use.

Computing the Stormwater Fee



The impervious area on each property is broken into 50 square foot (SF) segments. These segments are called “billing units” (BUs). Any fraction of a billing unit is rounded down to the nearest whole number and then multiplied by the stormwater fee to generate a monthly fee. For example, consider a property consisting of 2,178 square feet of impervious cover. By dividing that number by 50 square feet, the resulting billing units come to 43.56. That number is then rounded down to 43 BUs. The number of billing units, in this example being 43, is then multiplied by the \$.22 rate, yielding a monthly fee of \$9.46.

Stormwater Utility Credit Program

The Stormwater Utility Credit Program provides a way for a property owner to reduce their monthly Stormwater Utility bill by lessening their contribution stormwater runoff or improving the quality of that runoff. Credits are provided through the use of what are termed *Stormwater Best Management Practices* (BMPs). A maximum of a 50% credit, or reduction in the monthly fee, may be obtained for any customer who applies for credits and installs and maintains one or more of the BMPs from the Stormwater BMP



Toolbox. The BMP Toolbox is located on page 6 of this manual. From the example above, this could reduce the monthly fee from \$9.46 to as low as \$4.73.

Eligibility requirements for the fee credit program



- The BMP must be verified by City Staff as meeting the associated design requirements and being properly installed and operational.
- Property owners must own and maintain all associated components of the BMP.*
- Property owners must submit a BMP Maintenance Agreement for the associated BMP, agreeing to maintain each facility.
- Property Owners must agree to grant City staff access to the facilities for periodic inspections.

*BMPs improperly maintained will not be credited for the associated billing cycle. Credit for such facilities will not be reestablished until the measure has been properly maintained, verified as such by staff, and found to be in proper operation.

Application Procedure

City residents may submit a completed Residential Stormwater Utility Credit application to the 1st floor of the Administration Building located at 301 E. Cork Street or by email at stormwater@winchesterva.gov. All BMPs must be in place and operational when the application is submitted. Pictures, sketches, design information, and other supporting documentation should be included with the application. Applications are available for pick up on the 1st floor of the Administration Building located at 301 E. Cork Street or available for download at www.winchesterva.gov/PublicServices/StormwaterUtility.



Application Package Must Include the Following (if Applicable)

- ✓ Residential Credit Application Form
- ✓ Photo of BMP installed and operational if one of the following:
 - Rain Barrel
 - Rain Garden
 - Tree Planting
- ✓ Signed No Fertilizer Pledge Agreement
- ✓ Stormwater BMP Maintenance Agreement

Each application is reviewed for completeness and appropriateness given the current use and proposed location. Owners/applicants may be contacted by City staff regarding the need for additional information or to communicate the status of their application. Once deemed complete, applicants will be notified in writing as to the Department's decision of approval – please allow up to 60 days for processing of credit applications and crediting to the account. Denials may be appealed to the City Engineer and must be accomplished through the submission of a completed Stormwater Utility Appeals form.

Renewal of Credits

Credits will be valid for 1 or 3 years (depending on the type of credit) from the date of application approval or until transfer of ownership, whichever is first. The owner shall re-apply for credit every three years and will be notified 3 months prior to credit expiration that a new application will be required.

Transfer of Credits



Credits are non-transferrable and new property owners must apply for Residential Stormwater Utility Credits. Information must be submitted with a new application supporting any existing measures for which credit is being requested, verifying that the measure is in proper operating condition, and that the new owners are willing to permit City staff to enter the property to verify that condition.

Credit Donations

Credit donations are only available through the *Participation in City Cleanup Events* option. Participant attendance and credit may be donated to a specific property owner provided the information to whom the credits are being donated is provided at the event, and the person(s), civic group, or other party has registered with the Stormwater Utility as a donating party. Cleanup event participants may also elect to donate their time to the Donation Pool. The Donation Pool is a list of individuals who may be unable to attend cleanup events due to work conflicts, health issues, or other reasons. If you are interested in signing up for the Donation Pool, simply submit a request via email to stormwater@winchesterva.gov and provide your full name, address, and contact information.

Questions?

For questions pertaining to the Stormwater Utility Credits or design of the Runoff Reduction Measures (RRMs), please contact the City of Winchester Public Services Division at (540) 773-1340 or send an email to stormwater@winchesterva.gov.

Stormwater BMP Toolbox - Residential

BMP	Credits Available	Design Consideration
Credits for the following BMPs are valid for three (3) years		
Rain Barrel	5% Credit for every 400 sf of roof area captured. No eligibility for partial credits.	Volume of barrel must equal or exceed 55 gallons .
Tree Plantings	5% Credit for each tree planted per 3,000 sf of open space.	Applicants must show 3,000 square foot area within the associated property, exclusive of any impervious areas.
Rain Garden	Up to 35% credit based on impervious area draining to the measure.	Must meet the design requirements for Micro-Bioretenion or Rain Gardens pursuant to the Virginia BMP Clearinghouse. https://swbmp.vwrrc.vt.edu/
Septic System Disconnection	50% Credit	Applicants must provide documentation that the septic field has been properly abandoned and connection has been made to the City's system.
Project Partnerships	Up to 50% Credit.	Credit opportunities and assignments are evaluated by application.
Credits for the following BMPs are valid for one (1) year		
No Fertilizer Pledge	5% Credit	Owners must submit a Fertilizer Pledge Agreement for the associated property.
Participation in City Cleanup Events	5% Credit per event	Applicants must sign an attendance form at the event. One credit per residential account per event.

1. Credit applies solely to Trees planted after April 11, 2023. Existing mature trees are not credited as they do not provide an improvement to the existing conditions.
2. Open space means a 3000 square foot area (approx. 54' x 54') free of other trees or shrubs, or any structures or impervious surfaces.

Resources and References

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Pollution Prevention

<http://www.epa.gov/stormwater>

800-438-2474

Virginia Stormwater BMP Clearinghouse

BMP design standards and specifications

<https://swbmp.vwrrc.vt.edu/>

The Center for Watershed Protection

Fact sheets, design guidance, and reference materials

<http://www.cwp.org>

Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District

Watershed education, low impact development information, backyard conservation, lawn and tree care tips, rain garden and rain barrel information

<http://www.vaswcd.org>

804-559-0324

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

Watershed education, lawn care and pet waste information, land conservation

<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov>

804-786-1712

Department of Forestry

Information on Water Quality and rain gardens

Rain garden Technical Guide

<http://www.dof.virginia.gov>

434-977-6555

Clean Virginia Waterways

Rain barrel workshops and supplies, watershed education

<http://www.longwood.edu/cleanva>

434-395-2602

Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Water Quality, Lawn care tips, Bay education, rain garden & rain barrel information

<http://www.cbf.org>

804-648-4011

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

Bay education, Clean Stream projects, rain barrel and native landscaping information

<http://www.allianceforthebay.org>

804-775-0951

Lord Fairfax Soil and Water Conservation District

722-B East Queen Street

<http://www.lfswcd.org>

540-465-2424