

# City of Dahlonega Stormwater Utility

## *Stormwater Utility User Fee Credit Manual*

MAY 2020

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## SECTION 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION

Stormwater Utility (SW Utility) user fee credits are made available to private and public entities that undertake specific stormwater management activities to reduce their impact/demand on the City of Dahlonega (City) Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) and the associated costs that would otherwise be expended by the City SWMP. If a customer enacts a specific credit activity that is approved by the City, then the customer will receive a credit on their monthly stormwater user fee bill. Credits will be periodically reviewed by the City for compliance with the applicable standards in the City of Dahlonega SW Utility Credit Manual (the Manual). Credits are given for both structural and non-structural stormwater management activities and include, but are not limited to, the following: detention ponds, stormwater controls, best management practices (BMPs), education programs, stormwater runoff infiltration, watershed stewardship and other approved activities as determined/defined by the City.

The Manual outlines the criteria and procedures for the City of Dahlonega SW Utility customers to secure and maintain a stormwater user fee credit(s) for their property/customer account. An approved SW Utility user fee credit will result in a reduction of the customer's monthly stormwater user fee charge. Implementation of the credit activities by the customer should reduce the impact of stormwater runoff from the subject property on the City's stormwater management system, and corresponding cost to the City to provide SWMP services to that customer. The credit is only applicable for City approved stormwater BMPs, activities and/or programs that are properly designed, constructed (or implemented) and maintained in accordance with this Manual.

### Definitions

The definitions included in the SW Utility Ordinances will be adopted herein by reference.

*Billing Unit (BU):* means the stormwater user fee charge billing unit increment of 1,000 square feet, or any portion thereof, of impervious surface.

*Credit:* means a reduction in the amount of a customer's stormwater user fee charge in recognition of a customer's efforts to mitigate the stormwater runoff impact that developed property has on the City stormwater management services and systems, and/or the efforts of a customer to offset the City's cost for implementation of stormwater management program related activities.

*Customers of the Stormwater Utility:* shall include all persons, properties, and entities serviced by and/or benefitting from the services provided by the City's stormwater management program and the Stormwater Utility. These services include, but are not necessarily limited to, the Stormwater Utility's administration, management, maintenance, expansion, and improvement of the stormwater management systems for the handling and disposal of stormwater runoff from private and public properties, and the regulation of the public and private stormwater management systems, controls, facilities, and activities.

*Dwelling Unit:* shall mean a structure, regardless of the type or method of construction, which contains one (1) or more bedrooms, a bathroom, and cooking facilities, designed for occupancy by a one or more person(s) regardless of relationship, living as a single-family unit.

*Georgia Stormwater Management Manual (GSMM)*: shall refer to the 2016 technical guidance document (Vol. 2 – Technical Guidance) governing stormwater management design, construction and long-term maintenance activities in Georgia. The GSMM can be found by using the following link: <https://atlantaregional.org/natural-resources/water/georgia-stormwater-management-manual/>.

*Green Infrastructure (GI)*: shall refer to the concept whereby sustainable water resources management practices are implemented for land development (and re-development) projects in an effort to protect, restore, or mimic the natural water cycle. GI typically involves the use of landscape features to store, infiltrate and/or evaporate stormwater runoff. GI works in concert with Low Impact Development (LID) and the concept is commonly referred to as GI/LID.

*Impervious area*: shall mean and have the same definition as impervious surface.

*Impervious surface*: means those areas which prevent or impede the infiltration of stormwater into the soil in the manner in which it entered the soil, in natural conditions, prior to development and causes stormwater runoff to collect, concentrate or flow in a manner materially different from what would occur if the land were in an unaltered/undeveloped natural condition. Common impervious surfaces include, but are not limited to, rooftops, buildings or structures, sidewalks, walkways, patio areas, driveways, parking lots, storage areas, awnings and other fabric or plastic coverings, and other surfaces which prevent or impede the natural infiltration of stormwater runoff which existed prior to development.

*Improved property (or developed property)*: means property altered from its natural state by construction or installation of more than five hundred (500) square feet of impervious and/or partially impervious surfaces.

*Low Impact Development (LID)*: shall refer to an approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible to preserve, maintain and/or restore a watershed's hydrologic and ecological functions. LID can be characterized as a sustainable storm water practice that employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features, minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage that manages stormwater as a resource. Typical GI/LID practices include bioretention facilities, rain gardens, vegetated rooftops, rain barrels, and permeable pavements.

*Non-Single Family Residential (NSFR) Property*: shall mean a developed parcel of land that consists of various non-residential land uses including, but not limited to: (1) multi-family, commercial (including mixed commercial & residential), office/institutional, public, transportation, industrial, manufacturing and storage buildings and facilities; (2) parking lots, parks, public and private schools, universities and hospitals; (3) streets, roads, water and wastewater treatment plants; and (4) any other form of use not specifically defined as a detached single family residential property (DSFR).

*Parcel*: shall mean a designated parcel or tract, established by plat, subdivision, or as otherwise permitted by law, to be separately owned, used, developed, or built upon.

*Partial impervious surface*: shall mean those areas which allow for limited infiltration of rainfall and surface water runoff into the soil in the manner that is more similar to natural conditions

than “impervious surface” as defined above. Partial impervious surfaces influence and affect stormwater runoff such that the runoff is collected, concentrated and/or flows in a manner that is materially different from what would occur if the land were in an unaltered natural condition. Common partial impervious surfaces include, but are not limited to, compacted gravel and/or compacted soils.

*Private stormwater management systems and facilities:* shall mean those natural and manmade channels, swales, ditches, rivers, streams, creeks, branches, reservoirs, ponds, drainageways, inlets, catch basins, pipes, headwalls, storm drains, lakes and other physical works, properties and improvements which transfer, control, convey or otherwise influence the movement of stormwater runoff or water quality, for which operation and maintenance is the responsibility of the owner or successor or assignee thereof, and which have not been conveyed or dedicated to the City for future maintenance.

*Public stormwater management systems and facilities:* shall mean that portion of the drainage system consisting of natural and/or man-made structures, within the political boundaries of the city which channel or convey storm water from its point of collection to a point of discharge, owned by the City, over which the City has a legal right of access, have been formally dedicated to and accepted by the City for maintenance, or over which the City exercises dominion and control.

*Single-Family Residential (SFR) Property:* shall mean a developed property containing one residential structure with no more than two dwelling units in or attached thereto, situated upon a single lot of record. Improved property may be classified as SFR even if supplemental accessory structures are present such as garages, carports, storage buildings, guesthouses, servants or caretakers’ quarters, cottages or barns, or the presence of a commercial use within the residence, as long as such use does not result in significant additional amounts of impervious surfaces. SFR properties shall not include improved property containing structures used primarily for non-residential purposes; manufactured homes located within manufactured home parks where the land is owned by someone other than the owners of the manufactured homes; residential condominium developments with more than two units; or vacant/undeveloped property.

*Stormwater management services:* mean all water quality and water quantity related services provided by the City which relate to the following:

- (1) Transfer, control, conveyance or movement of stormwater runoff through the incorporated portions of the City;
- (2) Maintenance, repair and replacement of existing stormwater management systems and facilities;
- (3) Planning, development, design and construction of additional stormwater management systems and facilities to meet current and anticipated needs;
- (4) Regulation of the use of stormwater management services, systems and facilities; and
- (5) Compliance with applicable State and Federal stormwater management regulations and permit requirements;

(6) Other services as deemed appropriate by the City.

*Stormwater management systems and facilities:* mean those natural and manmade channels, swales, ditches, rivers, streams, creeks, branches, reservoirs, ponds, drainage ways, inlets, catch basins, pipes, headwalls, storm sewers, public streets, curbs and gutters, lakes and other physical works, properties and improvements which transfer, control, convey, detain, retain, treat or otherwise influence the movement of stormwater runoff.

*Stormwater Utility Manager:* means the person appointed by the City Manager to administer the provisions of this article.

*Stormwater user fee charge:* means the periodic user fee charge for the provision of stormwater management services imposed pursuant to this Article of the *Dahlonega Stormwater Utility Ordinance*. This term shall exclude special charges to the owners and/or tenants of particular properties for services, systems or facilities related to stormwater management, including, but not limited to, charges for development plan review, inspection of development projects, and other stormwater management related services provided by Dahlonega for which a corresponding fee is collected for the service rendered.

### Summary of Stormwater User Fee Credits

Table 1 summarizes the user fee credits available to the SW Utility customers. Please refer to the ensuing sections of this document for further details on the various credits, policies, procedures, etc. Per City policy, the maximum user fee credit that a customer account can receive is **50%**.

<b>Table 1: Stormwater User Fee Credit Summary</b>				
<b>Credit Description</b>	<b>Credit Term</b>	<b>Potential Stormwater User Fee Credit Customer Types and Amount</b>		
		<b>Single Family Residential (SFR)</b>	<b>Non-Single Family Residential (NSFR)</b>	<b>Stormwater User Fee Credit</b>
<b>User Fee Credits</b>				
Tree Planting	5 years	x		10% - 20%
Low-Impact Parcel	5 years	x	x	25%
No Direct Discharge	5 years	x		(Up to) 50%
Septic Tank Maintenance	5 years	x	x	10%
Natural Area Preservation	5 years	x	x	(Up to) 20%
Residential GI/LID	5 years	x		20%
Non-Residential GI/LID	5 years		x	(Up to) 50%
Watershed Stewardship	5 years		x	5%
Stormwater /Water Quality Education Program	5 years		x	50%
NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit	5 years		x	30%
<i>Stormwater Facility (i.e. Detention Pond, Retention Pond) <sup>1,2</sup></i>				
Non-GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond	5 years		x	15 - 25%
GSMM <sup>3</sup> Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond	5 years		x	50%

<sup>1</sup> Residential customers that are part of a larger common development (or subdivision) can collectively apply for credits related to the detention pond credit with approval from the SW Utility Manager.

<sup>2</sup>Stormwater facilities must be properly maintained and operating in accordance with their original design for a facility to be eligible for credit.

## Stormwater User Fee Credit Policies

The City has established the following general policies regarding consideration and approval of stormwater user fee credits. Please refer to applicable sections of the City SW Utility Ordinances for additional guidance and requirements pertaining to the stormwater user fee credits.

- Applications for a stormwater user fee credit for existing facilities may be submitted to the City at any time.
- Approved credits will be applied to the customer's next stormwater user fee bill following approval.
- Applications for a stormwater user fee credit associated with new development (or redevelopment) sites may be submitted once the BMP is constructed and the BMP has been inspected by representatives of the City.
- Credits are only approved for (and applied to) eligible customers that meet applicable criteria as set forth in the Manual. The stormwater user fee is being assessed on an individual customer account basis as outlined in the City SW Utility Ordinances. Therefore, credit applications must be made by the entity that owns the property and/or is responsible for payment of the utility account. If the responsible entity for payment of SW Utility user fee changes, the new customer must re-apply for the credit with the City regardless if the term has expired or is still active. The new customer may be able to rely on some (or all) of the information from a previous credit application package, but it will be the responsibility of the applicant to verify the information within the submitted credit application package.
- A group of customers cannot apply for a credit except as stipulated below. An eligible customer is defined as a property or site that contributes stormwater runoff to the qualifying stormwater control and/or BMP located on the same property/site via natural and/or manmade conveyance systems. If a group of properties/sites are served by a single BMP or systems of BMPs, then the credit can be applied to the customer on whose property/site which the BMP resides. This applicant will be referred to as the primary applicant. If the primary applicant provides a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the primary applicant and another customer(s) for which the BMP(s) provides adequate treatment for the applicable credit, the City will consider application of the credit to all customers named in the MOA. The credit shall be applied to all applicants until such time as the primary applicant notifies the City that the MOA is no longer in effect or the term of the credit expires, whichever occurs sooner. If the MOA is revoked by the primary applicant, the credit shall only apply to the primary applicant.
- A residential homeowner's association (HOA), or a common development such as a multi-family apartment complex, which has its own properly designed, constructed, and maintained stormwater BMP(s) should contact the City SW Utility Manager to determine if the HOA members, or common development customers, are eligible for a credit. For the purposes of the credit, the BMP(s) must be located on a parcel that is platted within the common development and owned by the HOA (or a single property owner within the subdivision or common development).
  - For the purposes of awarding the credit, the credit being applied for must be met for the entire common development and must meet the Manual criteria.



- Any resulting credit awarded will be divided among eligible customers within the HOA or the common development.
- BMPs located on City owned property are not eligible for credits. Additionally, BMPs that the City maintains through a dedicated maintenance easement or other legal agreement though lying within private property cannot be used by the customer for credit purposes. Please refer to the City's SW Utility Ordinances for further clarification regarding the City's extent of service policy and its scope of responsibility
- During the credit term outlined in the Manual, the City has the right to conduct inspections and/or inquiries to the applicant to ensure conformance to the Manual criteria. If the BMP facility or program is not functional or is not being maintained, the City has the authority to void the credit on the next billing cycle. Before a credit is re-instated, the customer will have to reapply for the credit as outlined in this manual.
- The term of the credit is five years from the date that stormwater utility charges begin accruing. Credits will expire at the end of the fifth year of the cycle, or December 31, 2025, regardless of when during that cycle they were approved.
- The City may utilize a certification process for customer accounts that have received a credit to certify that the existing credit is still in place at the end of its five-year term. This certification process will require the customer to demonstrate that their property is still eligible for a credit and continues to meet the criteria outlined in the Credit Manual. Failure of the customer to certify his/her credit as required by the City policy could result in credit revocation. The City will develop the annual certification procedure and make it available to customers via the City website and other methods as deemed appropriate. However, it will be the responsibility of the customer to ensure compliance with the annual certification requirement.

### **Stormwater Utility User Fee Credit Application Procedures**

The following is an overview of the stormwater user fee credit application procedures that a customer should follow to obtain and maintain credits. All of the credits in this Manual require an application, and some of the credit applications require engineering analysis to demonstrate and verify credit eligibility. The credits associated with engineering analysis are identified in the Manual along with the credit application forms. The City requires that these calculations be performed, signed, and sealed in accordance with the appropriate Georgia professional certification provisions outlined herein (i.e. engineer, surveyor, landscape architect, etc). The procedure for submitting a credit application generally includes the following tasks:

1. Obtain a copy of the Credit Manual from the City and determine what (if any) credits the customer may be eligible to apply for and fill out the required application materials.
2. If required by the credit, retain a Georgia Professional Engineer, Landscape Architect, and/or Land Surveyor to perform the required technical analysis.
3. Submit the completed credit application with all sections appropriately filled out and attach all the required supporting documentation.
4. The City may elect to perform an inspection of the customer's site and proposed activity, or to review the non-structural practice being implemented, to ensure conformance to the

Manual criteria. As such, the customer must grant the City a Right-of-Entry or access easement as part of the application and approval process.

5. The City will review complete application packages and notify the customer if the request is approved or denied within 30 days of receipt of the application. Incomplete application packages will not be considered by the City and will be returned to the customer for completion and/or revision.
6. If the credit is approved, the stormwater user fee credit will be applied, starting with the next customer billing cycle. If the City representative does not approve of the customer's application, the City will send a letter to the customer explaining why the credit application was not approved.

## **SECTION 2 – CREDIT POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Listed below are the stormwater user fee credits that SW Utility customers are eligible to apply for and secure. Customers should follow the credit application procedures outlined herein for each credit they desire to secure.

- Tree Planting
- Low-Impact Parcel
- No Direct Discharge
- Septic Tank Maintenance
- Natural Area Preservation
- Reduced SFR Footprint
- Residential GI/LID
- Non-Residential GI/LID
- Watershed Stewardship
- Stormwater / Water Quality Education Program
- NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit
- Non-GSMM Stormwater Facility Detention Pond
- GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond

## **Tree Planting**

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Eligible Customer Classes: SFR and NSFR

### *Credit Description*

The City desires to promote and encourage an expansive and healthy tree canopy throughout the City. Although most property owners are well aware of the value of planting trees with respect to aesthetics, property values, and decreased energy costs, many do not know that planting and preserving trees can also improve water quality and stormwater management overall. Trees intercept large amounts of rain on their surface areas (leaves, branches, and trunks) and absorb rainfall through their root systems that mitigates the impacts of stormwater runoff quantity and quality.

The customer must address the following to establish eligibility for a Stormwater Utility user fee credit associated with tree planting and/or tree preservation:

1. Plant and/or preserve trees above and beyond the minimum requirements as documented in the City's Tree Ordinance
2. In the case of new development or redevelopment projects, a proposed plan should include at least 10% more than is required by the ordinance to be eligible for a user fee credit.
3. In the case of existing sites that desire to retrofit new trees into the site, City staff must approve the plan prior to installation of trees.
4. Trees planted or located within the City Street Right of Way or other City owned property do not qualify for a user fee credit.
5. The City may utilize aerial photography or any other means to assess existing tree canopy on existing lots or to assess the historical tree canopy for a site.
6. Trees must be planted and preserved properly and be maintained in good, healthy condition to continue to receive a user fee credit.

### *Eligible Credit*

The maximum user fee credit for the Tree Planting Credit has been established at 20%.

New Development / Redevelopment Sites: A SW Utility customer can achieve the 20% maximum through a combination of increased density and/or caliper size for the proposed tree planting plan. In general, the criteria to secure this credit is to develop a proposed tree planting/landscape plan that exceeds the minimum requirements by at least 10%. A proposed plan that exceeds the minimum standards by more 10% will be eligible for a credit of the same percentage, up to 20%. For example, if the customer proposed to exceed the ordinance minimum standards by 15%, then that customer would receive a 15% credit on their stormwater user fee. The applicant should work with City staff to determine the total credit percentage for their site/account based on: (1) the minimum tree planting/landscaping ordinance requirements; (2) the proposed exceedance of the minimum requirements; and (3) the calculations associated with the applicable requirements.

*Existing Development: Where the stormwater user fee customer wishes to plant trees to receive credit, the customer shall receive a 1% credit for each tree planted per acre of total property, up to 20%. Where the total property area is less than one acre, credit shall be awarded at 1% per tree planted. The applicant must follow the requirements for caliper size and species as specified in the City's Tree Ordinance. An applicant desiring to go this route should consult with the City prior to initiating any tree planting or landscape modification plans for an existing site. The applicant must have their tree planting plan approved by the City prior to installation of any trees or before credit is awarded.*

*Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documentation (New Development or Redevelopment Projects)*

The customer shall provide the City with a plan to illustrate how the applicant intends to meet or exceed the minimum standards of the City's Tree Ordinance. Review the proposed tree planting and landscape plan with the City staff and SW Utility Manager to ensure that all applicable City Codes are adhered to and to document the extent to which the proposed plan exceeds the minimum standards.

For new developments/redevelopments, at the conclusion of the field work, prepare a post-construction as-built survey of the work performed and ensure that it is consistent with the approved credit application. Submit as-built to the City and the City will perform an inspection to ensure the activities completed adhered to the approved plan.

**Low-Impact Parcel**

*Eligible Customer Classes: SFR and NSFR*

*Credit Description*

There are some properties/sites in the City where the total impervious area footprint is relatively small as compared to the gross parcel area. The ratio of impervious surface to gross parcel area can result in reduced stormwater runoff impacts since a majority of the parcel is undeveloped.

A credit shall apply to customers who can prove that their parcel meets the “low-impact” development criteria presented herein. The low impact parcel credit criteria are summarized in Table 2:

<b>Table 2: Stormwater User Fee Credit Criteria for Low-Impact Parcels</b>	
<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Requirements*</b>
Total Impervious Area (%)	Must be less than 10% of total site area
Total Site Area (Acres)	Must be greater than 2 acres

Each customer that wishes to apply for this credit shall be responsible for calculating the total site area and impervious surface area. Each customer shall utilize the following procedures:

- Determine the total gross area of the parcel. The gross area must be a minimum of two (2) acres.
- Determine the total impervious area for the parcel. This can be determined through a site survey or by using aerial imagery. Upon request, the City can provide this information for existing SW Utility customers. The impervious area shall include the structure, driveway, loading dock, sidewalk (do not include the sidewalk in the City right of way), pool deck, patio, shed, or any other accessory impervious area. The total amount of impervious surface must be less than 10% of the total gross area of the parcel. Total gross area includes both pervious and impervious areas.
  - total parcel area (TPA)
  - impervious area (IA)
  - Calculation:  $IA / TPA = 0.10$  (or less)

*Eligible Credit*

If the parcel meets all the requirements above, the customer would be eligible for a credit of 25% off their total stormwater user fee charge.

*Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documents*

The customer shall provide a site plan or map showing the total gross parcel area and the total impervious surface area. Total impervious surface area shall be detailed to include which portion pertains to the structure, driveway, sidewalk, and other accessory areas that do not allow for infiltration of rainfall and runoff. This information should be documented in the form of a plan and aerial image that will allow City personnel to verify the measurements, calculations and other pertinent information.

## **No Direct Discharge**

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*Eligible Customer Classes: SFR and NSFR*

*Credit Description*

A property or site that does not contribute a discernable amount of stormwater runoff to the City's public drainage system either directly or indirectly shall be eligible for a No Direct Discharge stormwater user fee credit, if it meets the criteria outlined in this Manual.

The No Direct Discharge credit is typically available to those residential and non-residential property owners (or customers) who can demonstrate that stormwater runoff, after leaving the property, does not drain/discharge to a City-owned drainage facility and/or system and ultimately drains/discharges to the drainage system of another local government, or a waterway that is not considered part of the City's public drainage system, such that the site discharge never flows through the City of Dahlonega public drainage system at any point downstream. This type of condition would most likely exist for properties that abut the City limits and stormwater runoff discharges into Lumpkin County.

*Eligible Credit*

A credit of up to 50% off the stormwater user fee charge is available for No Direct Discharge for a period of five years. The total credit may be reduced if only a portion of the site drains to the City's public drainage system. For example, if half the customer's property drained to City of Dahlonega 's system and half drained to the Lumpkin County system, that customer would be eligible for a 25% (or half of 50%) credit off their stormwater user fee charge.

*Stormwater Credit Application*

The customer shall provide the City the necessary information pertaining to the drainage conveyance from their property to the appropriate downstream points. This information should be documented in the form of a topographical based drainage map or plan.



## **Septic Tank Maintenance**

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*Eligible Customer Classes: SFR and NSFR*

*Credit Description*

Residential and non-residential customers are eligible for a stormwater user fee credit if the customer conducts approved maintenance activities on existing septic systems located on the customer's property. SW Utility customers with septic systems can receive a credit by having their septic tanks pumped out on a regular basis (minimum of every five years). Customers would be eligible to receive the credit for the period of five years after the septic tank was pumped out. The customer must submit documentation to the City in the form of a receipt from a properly licensed hauler of septic wastes. It is the customer's responsibility to confirm that the hauler has secured the required State and/or Local permits and license to haul and dispose of septic wastes. Customers may re-apply for this credit at the end of every five-year credit term. The septic system maintenance credit will be applied to the customer applying for the stormwater user fee credit.

There shall only be one stormwater user fee credit issued per customer account in which regular maintenance is conducted on the septic system and it shall only be good for a period of five years. It is the customer's responsibility to contact a licensed hauler of septic wastes and submit the necessary documentation that the septic system maintenance has been conducted.

The customer shall continue to conduct maintenance on the septic system at a minimum of every five years in order to qualify and receive the stormwater user fee credit on a continual basis. Renewal of the stormwater user fee credit shall be in accordance with the criteria outlined in this Manual.

*Eligible Credit*

A maximum credit of 10% off the stormwater user fee charge is available for five years for approved septic tank maintenance activities.

*Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Procedures*

The customer shall secure the pertinent documentation from a licensed hauler of septic waste. For the purposes of securing a credit, a receipt from the hauler will be sufficient if the receipt contains the date the maintenance was performed, the address of the property matching the address on the stormwater user fee credit bill, and the name of the company performing the work. The work must have been performed within five years of the application date.

## **Natural Area Preservation**

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*Eligible Customer Classes: SFR and NSFR*

*Credit Description*

The City will grant a stormwater user fee credit for those customers that provide for Natural Area Preservation in accordance with the criteria outlined in this Manual. In order for a customer to be eligible for this credit, the customer must demonstrate that at least one acre of contiguous green space will be preserved. In general, lands that would likely qualify for natural area preservation credit must be in its undeveloped land in its natural state.

In order for a SW Utility customer to qualify for this credit, the natural area must be permanently protected through a conservation easement or other deed restriction, or the land set aside and permanently protected as part of a conservation subdivision development.

*Eligible Credit*

The customer would be eligible to receive a 1% credit for every 1% of the total area of the property that is permanently protected. The customer could receive a maximum of up to a 20% credit for Natural Area Preservation for an unlimited period of time.

*Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Procedures*

The customer shall provide the City the necessary information which documents that the site conditions meet the applicable criteria for this credit. This information should be documented in the form of a site plan and map, which is prepared and sealed by a Georgia Professional Engineer or Land Surveyor, unless otherwise approved by the SW Utility Manager. A copy of the conservation easement agreement or deed restriction that creates the permanent protection must also be included.

## **Residential GI/LID Practices**

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### *Eligible Customer Classes: Residential*

#### *Credit Description*

Residential SW Utility customers are eligible for a stormwater user fee credit if the customer implements an eligible, City approved Residential GI/LID practice in a single residential lot. These GI/LID practices may include, but are not necessarily limited to, practices such as rain barrels, cisterns, rain gardens, bio-retention cells, pervious pavements, etc. The City wishes to encourage the installation of these types of stormwater management GI/LID practices to promote and encourage more environmentally responsible and sustainable residential development within the City. The City believes that the customer should first consider which practices are the most appropriate to their parcel and are encouraged to contact the City SW Utility Manager to select the most appropriate Residential GI/LID practice(s) for their site.

A credit shall apply to those customers who can prove that their property has successfully installed an appropriate Residential GI/LID practice. Each customer that wishes to apply for this credit shall work with the City to establish the effectiveness of the Residential GI/LID practice and the customer will be responsible for providing the necessary information in support of the user fee credit application.

#### *Eligible Credit*

If the parcel meets all the requirements above, the customer would be eligible for a credit of 20% off their stormwater user fee for a period of five years.

#### *Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Supporting Documentation*

The customer shall identify the GI/LID practice or BMP to be utilized and ensure it is designed, maintained, and operated in accordance with general stormwater management requirements outlined in the GSMM and this Manual. The customer shall provide a photograph of the installed practice on their property. City staff reserves the right to inspect the property to ensure that the practice is properly installed prior to issuing a credit.

## **Non-Residential GI/LID Practices**

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### *Eligible Customer Classes: NSFR*

#### *Credit Description*

Customers are eligible for the full GI/LID stormwater user fee credit, if the customer can demonstrate that the on-site GI/LID stormwater management practices can successfully infiltrate the first 1.0" of rainfall in accordance with the GSMM Infiltration standards. Customers may be able to qualify for a partial credit if they can demonstrate that the GI/LID practice infiltrates less than the first 1.0" of stormwater runoff.

The infiltration associated with GI/LID practices must be appropriately documented through technical analysis by a qualified professional (i.e. engineer, surveyor, landscape architect), and must meet the standards of the GSMM and ACC's Post Construction Stormwater Runoff Management Ordinance.

The customer shall continue to conduct maintenance as per the maintenance plan provided with the original application. The customer may reapply for the credit every five years. If a customer is reapplying for a GI/LID Infiltration credit and site conditions have not changed since the original application, the application only needs to include a copy of the original hydrological study and certification that all maintenance has been performed per the maintenance plan for re-issuance of the credit. If site improvements or changes have been made to the property, then the hydrology study will need to be updated to document compliance with the Manual criteria.

The customer shall continue to conduct maintenance as per the maintenance plan provided with the original application. The customer may reapply for the credit every five years. If a customer is reapplying for a Stormwater Runoff Infiltration credit and site conditions have not changed since the original application, the application only needs to include a copy of the original hydrological study and certification that all maintenance has been performed per the maintenance plan for re-issuance of the credit. If site improvements or changes have been made to the property, then the hydrology study will need to be updated to document compliance with the Manual criteria.

#### *Eligible Credit*

A credit of up to 50% off the stormwater user fee charge is available for stormwater infiltration for a period of five years. The total credit may be reduced if part of the site does not infiltrate stormwater to the standards outlined above.

#### *Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Procedures*

The customer shall provide a hydrology report prepared by and sealed by a Georgia Professional Engineer or Registered Land Surveyor or Registered Landscape Architect demonstrating compliance with the requirements and criteria outlined herein:

- Pre-Development runoff rates and volumes leaving the property prior to development.

- Post-Development runoff rates and volumes leaving their property in its current, developed condition.
- Documentation regarding site groundwater table conditions and the impacts (if any) those conditions have on surface water infiltration.
- Description of the methods and calculations utilized to develop the predictions of pre-development and post-development flow rates and volumes.
- Description of the stormwater controls and other site improvements that have been implemented to reduce the post-development runoff rates and volumes.
- Description of the stormwater controls and GI/LID practices utilized along with supporting data demonstrating that the site conforms to the infiltration and water quality standards for an individual site development as outlined in the GSMM.
- Maintenance plan for those site features necessary to maintain the reduction in stormwater runoff discharge rates and volumes to pre-development runoff conditions or less.

## **Watershed Stewardship**

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### *Eligible Customer Classes: NSFR*

#### *Credit Description*

SW Utility customers are eligible for a stormwater user fee credit if the customer participates in a City approved local watershed stewardship event. Eligible events are set up, organized, and executed through a partnership with the City. There shall only be one stormwater user fee credit certificate issued per property/customer account regardless of the number of participants. NSFR customers seeking this credit will have to demonstrate that at least 10 individuals or 10% of their staff or attendees (whichever is less) participated in this event to receive a credit.

In general, eligible watershed stewardship activities may include community programs such as Adopt-A-Stream, City approved Rivers Alive or Great American Cleanup Day (or other City approved stream clean up events), City-approved Storm Drain Marking, etc. Other eligible credit programs may be added in the future, but customers should verify activity eligibility with the City SW Utility Manager in advance. The customer can only receive one watershed stewardship event credit during each year.

#### *Eligible Credit*

A 5% credit off the stormwater user fee charge is available for the Watershed Stewardship Credit for a period of five years.

#### *Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Documentation*

The customer shall provide the appropriate certificate for the Watershed Stewardship Program event. This information must certify the number of participants and provide the total number of staff, attendees, students, or congregants. Attendance at events not sponsored by the City may can be transferable to the City's stormwater user fee credit program, if approved by the City SW Utility Manager.

## **Stormwater / Water Quality Education Program**

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*Eligible Customer Classes: NSFR (Public & Private Education Institutions)*

### *Credit Description*

The City encourages and supports the efforts of both public and private organizations to educate and inform the public on the importance of water resources management issues. In an effort to further encourage this type of educational activity, the City shall offer a stormwater user fee credit to eligible customers that meet the criteria outlined in this Manual.

The Water Resources Education Program credit shall be made available to all public or private educational institutions that meet the criteria set forth herein and that conduct approved educational activities as part of their day-to-day curriculum. Eligible institutions would include, but not necessarily be limited to, Lumpkin County Public Schools (inside the City), private schools, and public and private universities located inside the City limits.

In order to be eligible for this credit, the education program taught must be consistent with the City's stormwater management program and must also be pre-approved by the City SW Utility Manager.

- The credit shall be available to eligible customers that teach at least 500 students in an approved Water Resources Education Program, unless otherwise approved by the SW Utility Director.
- The program should address the following elements: stormwater runoff/pollution prevention, water quality, water conservation, and/or recycling.

### *Eligible Credit*

Approved credit applications will result in the award of a 50% credit to the customer's stormwater user fee. The "per customer account" credit may not total more than 50% and credit may only be applied to the property where the educational activities are taught. Credits cannot be applied to administrative facilities, dormitories, bus lots, parking lots, and other impervious areas that are not associated with the educational facility where the approved environmental classes are taught.

### *Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Procedures*

The following information shall be provided to the City in order to receive approval of the Water Resources Education Program credit:

- The person responsible for the customer account shall certify to the City SW Utility Manager that a water resources-based curriculum is being taught at the facility and the details regarding the program.
- Name of the customer applying for the credit.
- Address of site (property) and the point of contact.
- Approximate number of participants that have been taught the approved curriculum.





## **NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit Compliance**

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### *Eligible Customer Classes: NSFR*

#### *Credit Description*

Properties that operate a facility that must secure coverage per its Standard Industry Code (SIC) under the NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit are eligible for a stormwater user fee credit. Customers can receive a stormwater user fee credit by complying with applicable NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit requirements for industrial facilities. Implementation of the applicable compliance requirements assists the City in addressing water quality impairment issues at the source prior to discharge into the City's publicly-owned drainage system and/or State Waters. If the customer has properly secured coverage under the NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit, and is in compliance with all applicable requirements, i.e. development and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWP3), a credit application may be filed with the City to secure a credit.

In order to maintain the credit, the customer shall send a copy of an annual report of compliance to the City SW Utility Manager each year. Failure to make the required submittals could result in forfeiture of the stormwater user fee credit.

#### *Eligible Credit*

The credit amount available for NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit compliance is 30% off the stormwater user fee charge for a period of five year.

#### *Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Procedures*

The customer shall complete the application and include the required documents that verify compliance with the NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit. At a minimum, the documentation attached to the credit application shall include the following items below:

- Customer address and facility point of contact
- Copy of the current NPDES Industrial Stormwater Permit Notice of Intent (NOI)
- Copy of the annual report of compliance
- Copy of the SWP3
- Certification by the responsible party/permit holder that the NOI is current and the SWP3 is being implemented
- An executed Right of Entry Agreement.

## **Non-GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond Credit**

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### Eligible Customer Classes: NSFR\*

*\* SFR customers that are part of a larger common development (or subdivision) that has a privately maintained storm water control that was designed and constructed under the then current storm water design regulations can collectively apply for the credits related to the GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond Credit, after consultation with the SW Utility Manager to establish eligibility.*

The Non-GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond Credit has been designed for older detention ponds that were approved and constructed under design that differ from the GSMM.

The overall goal of City is to give a credit to eligible customers that are reducing the impact of stormwater generated by their property. By reducing the peak discharge of stormwater from their property, the property owners/customer reduces the burden they impose on the City drainage system and the downstream receiving waterway. The credit shall only be applied to that portion of the property served by the detention basin.

Credits are available under the following general conditions and criteria:

- A maximum of 15% credit on the water quantity charge is available for customers that can demonstrate that their facility is in good working order and that routine maintenance of the facility has been and will continue to be conducted in accordance with professional standards.
- A maximum of 20% credit on the water quantity charge is available to customers that can demonstrate that the peak stormwater discharge rate for the 10-year storm from their stormwater retention/detention facility for a post developed site condition ( $Q_{post}$ ) is no more than the peak stormwater discharge rate before development ( $Q_{pre}$ ) (i.e.  $Q_{post} = Q_{pre}$ ).
- A maximum of 25% credit on the water quantity charge is available to customers that can demonstrate that the peak stormwater discharge rate for the 10-year storm from their stormwater retention/detention facility for a post developed site condition ( $Q_{post}$ ) is at least 10% less than the peak stormwater discharge rate before development ( $Q_{pre}$ ) (i.e. a  $Q_{post}$  is 10% less than  $Q_{pre}$ ).
- The City reserves the right to establish the applicable credit for situations that may fall between the various criteria outlined above.

In order to maintain eligibility for the credit, the customer must properly maintain the onsite stormwater controls that were documented in the user fee credit application for the term specified in the Manual. Furthermore, all stormwater control design, construction and maintenance shall be done in strict accordance with the City's current ordinances and design standards related to stormwater management.

### *Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Procedures*

The customer shall follow the procedures below when applying for the detention pond user fee credit: The customer shall provide a hydrology report (or comparable document) prepared by and sealed by a Georgia Professional Engineer or Georgia Registered Land Surveyor or Registered Landscape Architect demonstrating compliance with the requirements and criteria outlined herein. The customer shall submit an executed Right of Entry Agreement, an ongoing

maintenance plan, and documentation that the facility/detention pond has been properly maintained to the City.

### **GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond**

*Eligible Customer Classes: NSFR\**

*\*SFR customers that are part of a larger common development (or subdivision) that has a privately maintained storm water control that was designed and constructed in accordance with the GSMM can collectively apply for the credits related to the GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond Credit, after consultation with the SW Utility Manager to establish eligibility.*

*Credit Description*

The Unified Stormwater Sizing Criteria as defined in the GSMM is an integrated approach to addressing stormwater runoff impacts associated with both water quality and quantity issues. Each of the unified stormwater sizing criteria are intended to be used in conjunction with the others to address overall stormwater runoff impacts site. When used as an overall set of criteria, the unified stormwater sizing criteria control and manage the entire range of stormwater runoff events from the smallest storm events to the largest storm events (i.e. the 100-year storm). The four stormwater runoff treatment levels described in the GSMM unified stormwater sizing criteria include water quality, channel protection, overbank flood protection, extreme flood protection, and runoff reduction. Table 3 presents each treatment level/criteria with a description of each, as provided in the GSMM.

<b>Treatment Level/ Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Available Credit</b>	<b>Criteria Description</b>
1. Runoff Reduction	20%	Attempt to infiltrate up to the first 1.0 inches of rainfall for the site. Per the GSMM, the purpose of this criteria treatment level is to reduce the volume of stormwater runoff by infiltrating it prior to collection, treatment, detention, and discharge. In most cases, if this criteria is fully met, criteria 2 is not necessary as its intent is already achieved.
	or	
2. Water Quality	10%	Capture and treat the first 1.2 inches of runoff, or the remaining amount of runoff that is not infiltrated under criteria 1. Per the GSMM, this equates to providing water quality treatment for the runoff associated with 85% of annual storm events with a goal reducing average annual post-development TSS loadings by 80%.
3. Channel Protection/ Aquatic Resources Protection	10%	Provide extended detention of the 1-year storm event released over a period of 24 hours to reduce bankfull flows and protect downstream channels and aquatic resources from erosive velocities and unstable flow conditions.
4. Overbank Flood Protection	10%	Provide peak discharge control of the 25-year storm event such that the post-development peak rate does not exceed the predevelopment rate to reduce overbank flooding.
5. Extreme Flood Protection	10%	Evaluate the effects of the 100-year storm on the stormwater management system, adjacent property, and downstream facilities and property. Manage the impacts of the extreme storm event through detention controls and/or floodplain management.

**Note:** The criteria description for each stormwater runoff treatment level is in general accordance with information published in the GSMM.

Credits are available under the following general conditions and criteria:

- This credit is not available for any portion of a parcel where a No Direct Discharge credit was secured unless otherwise approved by the SW Utility Manager.
- The stormwater facility must be in good working order and the customer must demonstrate that routine maintenance of the facility has been and will continue to be conducted in accordance with professional standards.
- The credit shall only be applied to that portion of the property served by the storm water facility.

The customer shall continue to conduct maintenance as per the maintenance plan provided with the original application. The customer may reapply for the credit every five years. If a customer is reapplying for the unified stormwater sizing criteria user fee credit and site conditions have not changed since the original application, the application only needs to include a copy of the original design information and certification that all the necessary maintenance has been performed per the maintenance plan for re-issuance of the credit. If significant changes to the site layout and/or site stormwater controls has occurred then the City may request that the design information be updated to document compliance with the Manual criteria.

#### *Eligible Credits*

A maximum credit of up to 50% off the stormwater user fee charge is available if a customer can achieve compliance with all five of the unified stormwater sizing criteria described herein.

#### *Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Procedures*

The customer shall provide a hydrology report (or comparable document) prepared by and sealed by a Georgia Professional Engineer or Georgia Registered Land Surveyor or Registered Landscape Architect demonstrating compliance with the requirements and criteria outlined herein. The customer shall submit the user fee credit application, an executed Right of Entry Agreement, an ongoing maintenance plan, and documentation that the facility/detention pond has been properly maintained to the City.

## **Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Forms & Other Miscellaneous Forms**

Stormwater user fee credit applications are required to secure approval of all credits offered in this Manual. The forms and documents attached to the appendices are summarized below.

- Appendix A includes the credit application forms for the residential stormwater user fee credits described in this Manual.
- Appendix B includes the credit application forms for the non-residential stormwater user fee credits described in this Manual.
- Appendix C includes miscellaneous forms required as part of the stormwater user fee credit application process, including a Right-of-Entry Agreement.

## **APPENDIX A: SFR Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Forms**

**APPENDIX A**

*City of Dahlonega SW Utility SFR Customer Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Form*

**Instructions:**

Fill out this form completely. One application must be submitted for each customer account. Follow the steps outlined in the applicable section of this Manual. Attach all appropriate documentation to support this request, as outlined herein.

Fill out and attach appropriate documentation. Mail completed form (with attachments) to:

City of Dahlonega  
Attn: SW Utility Manager  
465 Riley Road  
Dahlonega, GA 30533

I hereby request City of Dahlonega to review this application for a stormwater user fee credit(s). I further authorize the City to investigate the site characteristics of the above identified parcel for the purpose of evaluation for a stormwater user fee credit(s). I certify that I have authority to make such a request and grant such authority for the City staff (or their designee) to evaluate this property for the purposes of approval or denial of the user fee credit. The attached information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree to provide corrected information should there be any change in the information provided herein.

_____	_____	_____
Type or print name	Property Owner	SW Utility Account No.
_____	_____	
Signature	Date	

This form must be signed by an individual person who is responsible for the site operations and/or payment of the monthly utility bill. If the responsible person is not an individual person then the form must be signed by an officer, director, partner, or registered agent with authority to execute instruments for the customer account.

**Approval:**

_____	_____	_____
SW Utility Manager	Date	SW Utility Account No.



## APPENDIX A

### Residential Customer Stormwater User Fee Credit Application/Renewal Form

	Credit Description
	Residential GI/LID Practices
	Low Impact Parcel
	No Direct Discharge
	Septic Tank Maintenance
	Natural Area Preservation
	Residential GI/LID

#### General Customer Information:

Customer Name:	
Stormwater Utility Account Number:	
Mailing Address:	
Mailing City/Zip:	
Contact Phone/Fax Number:	
Contact E-mail Address:	

#### Property Information:

Parcel/Property Address (number and street):	
Parcel/Property Address (city and state and zip):	
Parcel Identification Number:	
Parcel/Property Location/Development:	
Authorized Contact, if different than Customer:	

**APPENDIX B: NSFR Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Forms**

**APPENDIX B**

*City of Dahlonega SW Utility NSFR Customer Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Form*

**Instructions:**

Fill out this form completely. One application must be submitted for each separate customer account. Multiple stormwater controls/credit requests may be included in the application for a single customer location/account. Please ensure all stormwater management facilities have properly designed and constructed and continue to be properly maintained. Attach all the necessary documentation to support the user fee credit request. Documentation shall include, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. Facility site plan with stormwater facilities/controls with delineated drainage areas.
2. Description of stormwater control facilities.
3. Appropriate pages from Volume 2 of the GSMM (latest version) identifying design requirements for each on-site stormwater control.
4. Documentation that the stormwater control facilities meet one or more criteria for the stormwater user fee credit(s).
5. Appropriate professional certification(s), if required per this Manual.
6. Pertinent regulatory compliance documentation, if applicable.
7. Completed Right-of-Entry Agreement (if applicable) and/or a maintenance plan (if applicable) per the requirements of this Manual.
8. Other pertinent information to support the user fee credit request.

Mail completed the completed form as well as the necessary attachments and supporting documentation to:

City of Dahlonega  
Attn: SW Utility Manager  
465 Riley Road  
Dahlonega, GA 30533

I hereby request City of Dahlonega to review this application for a stormwater user fee credit(s). I further authorize the City to investigate the site characteristics of the above identified parcel for the purpose of evaluation for a stormwater user fee credit(s). I certify that I have authority to make such a request and grant such authority for the City staff (or their designee) to evaluate this property for the purposes of approval or denial of the user fee credit. The attached information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree to provide corrected information should there be any change in the information provided herein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Type or print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
SW Utility Account No.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX B**

*City of Dahlonaga SW Utility Non-residential Stormwater User Fee Credit Application Form (continued)*

This form must be signed by an individual person who is responsible for the site operations and/or payment of the monthly utility bill. If the responsible person is not an individual person then the form must be signed by an officer, director, partner, or registered agent with authority to execute instruments for the customer account.

**Approval:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
SW Utility Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
SW Utility Account No.

## APPENDIX B

### NSFR Customer Stormwater User Fee Credit Application/Renewal Form

	Type Credit
	Tree Planting
	Low Impact Parcel
	No Direct Discharge
	Septic Tank Maintenance
	Natural Area Preservation
	Non-Residential GI/LID Practices
	Watershed Stewardship
	Stormwater/Water Quality Education Program
	NPDES Industrial Stormwater General Permit
	GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond
	Non-GSMM Stormwater Facility/Detention Pond

#### General Customer Information:

Customer Name:	
SW Utility Account Number:	
Mailing Address:	
Mailing City/Zip:	
Contact Phone/Fax Number:	
Contact E-mail Address:	

#### Property Information:

Parcel Address (number and street):	
Parcel Address (City, State and Zip):	
Parcel Identification Number:	
Parcel Location/Name of Development:	
Authorized Property Owner Contact (if different than Customer Name above):	

## **APPENDIX C: Right of Entry Form**

**APPENDIX C**

**Right of Entry Agreement – Stormwater User Fee Credit(s) Evaluation**

STATE OF GEORGIA, LUMPKIN COUNTY

I/We \_\_\_\_\_, the owner and/or tenant (circle which one or both) of the property commonly identified as \_\_\_\_\_, City of Dahlonega , Lumpkin County, State of Georgia, do hereby grant and give freely and without coercion, the right of access and entry to said property to City of Dahlonega , its agents, contractors, and subcontractors thereof, for the purpose of performing necessary evaluations of onsite stormwater facilities, controls and site activities related to stormwater runoff management on the \_\_\_\_\_ (hereinafter “facility”) located on Land Lot \_\_\_\_\_ in City of Dahlonega , Georgia.

The undersigned agrees and warrants to waive and hold harmless City of Dahlonega , its agents, employees, contractors, and subcontractors, for damage of any type, or any claim or action, either legal or equitable that might arise out of any activities on the above described property that are conducted by City of Dahlonega , its agents, employees, contractors and subcontractors, pursuant to this Agreement.

In consideration of this Right of Entry Agreement and the rights granted to City of Dahlonega herein, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, City of Dahlonega agrees, to perform only visual evaluations, and review pertinent facility records and information, necessary to verify stormwater user fee credit eligibility. I/We, will not/have not receive(d) any compensation for this Right of Entry Agreement.

For the considerations and purposes set forth herein, I set my hand this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Operator or Owner (identify which one)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
My Commission Expires

**City Acknowledgement:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
City SW Utility Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date