

STORM WATER FEE CREDITS FOR SINGLE FAMILY PROPERTIES

INTRODUCTION

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services Credit Application Instruction Manual provides for storm water fee credits for all properties except single family residential properties without homeowner's associations. A detailed process for obtaining credits for non-single family properties requires the property owner to prepare an engineering study and construct a storm water detention/pollution control system.

Since the storm water fee was introduced in the City of Charlotte in January 1993, several homeowners have pointed out that ponds on single family properties may also have water quality and quantity benefits. The City Engineering Department prepared a case study of seven representative ponds to determine if a partial or complete waiver of the storm water fee would be appropriate.

CASE STUDY

Unlike engineered detention facilities found on commercial sites, ponds on single family properties pose a number of analytical problems. Most of the ponds are natural, without any specific outlet devices. Measuring volume can be problematic, since the pond depths and amounts of sediment vary considerably. Although these "fishing holes" are considerably different from engineered facilities, common sense tells us that they do provide water quality and quantity benefits in some cases. City Engineering attempted, therefore, to use the analytical procedures developed for commercial sites on these ponds. Based on the results of the City's case study, the County gave a total credit of 70% for all appeals from single family property owners who have qualifying ponds. This policy does not cover properties which are contiguous to an drain into the Catawba River.

In December 1999, the *Policy to Establish Periodic Storm Water Service Charges for Properties within Mecklenburg County* was modified based on the Storm Water Utility Rate Allocation Analysis, which took into account past and future expenses by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services. Due to the fact that Mecklenburg County does not fund water quality activities from the storm water fee, the water quality portion of the fee credit was eliminated. The other remaining components of the fee are:

- Peak: costs associated with controlling peak storm discharges. These include capital improvements to increase the size of drainage systems, flood control and protection of structures from flooding.
- Volume: costs associated with controlling normal flows and maintaining existing drainage features.

The financial analysis of the City and County storm water utilities showed that 60% of the storm water fees are used to pay for volume control expenditures and 40% are used to pay for peak discharge control expenditures. These percentages are based on both major and minor system expenditures.

QUALIFYING CRITERIA

As part of the policy, the property in question must meet the following basic qualifications to be considered for a credit toward the storm water fee:

- The surface area of the pond must be at least 1% of the watershed.
- The pond must have standing water in it at all times, and must effectively detain runoff and control pollution.
- The pond must be maintained by the owner. Like commercial sites, lack of maintenance will cause the full fee to be reinstated.
- All but incidental runoff from the impervious area on the property must drain to the pond.
- The homeowner must own all or a significant part of the pond.
- The pond must be contiguous to the parcel in question.
- Developments with homeowner's associations responsible for an engineered facility are not covered by this policy. Such developments must apply in the same manner as commercial developments.

POLICY

In accordance with the Mecklenburg County Policy to Establish Periodic Storm Water Service Charges for Properties within Mecklenburg County, any customer can request a fee adjustment through the appeals process. For those customers that own single family properties with qualifying ponds, the following fee credits will be given:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent Credit</u>
Peak (40% maximum)	40%
Volume (60% maximum)	8%
	48% Total Credit

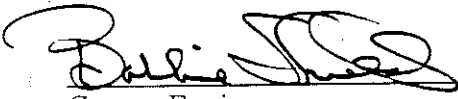
Example:


For a parcel in the County or Towns (excluding Davidson) currently receiving a monthly bill of \$3.72, which includes a \$0.70 billing and collection charge per bill, the new amount would be:

$$(\$3.72 - \$0.70)(100\% - 48\%) = \$1.57 \text{ per month} + \$0.70 \text{ per bill}$$

This credit policy is effective July 1, 2000.

ADOPTED THE 30TH DAY OF JUNE, 2000.


County Engineer


County Manager