

# TOWN OF BUTNER STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SERVICES AND FEES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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## 1 Stormwater

### 1.1 What is stormwater and why does it matter?

Stormwater is the runoff that occurs over land, roads, parking lots, and other surfaces during and after rain. If it rains hard enough, water cannot be absorbed into the ground and instead flows over the surface, where it picks up dirt and pollutants. Eventually, this water makes it into streams, rivers, and lakes with everything it picked up along the way. These materials can be harmful to the water quality in these water bodies. Stormwater drains and ditches along the roadside are meant to control the flow of stormwater and keep it from picking up too many dangerous materials.

### 1.2 What is the Stormwater Utility?

The Utilities are a regional effort of Person County, Granville County, Butner, Creedmoor, and Stem to coordinate efforts around stormwater management. These five jurisdictions have been providing stormwater services (such as drainage maintenance, leaf collection, and flood control) for many years without having a formal utility. With the creation of the utilities, the same services can be provided more effectively and more cost-efficiently. In addition, the member jurisdictions can work together to comply with the Falls Rules and promote environmental health downstream.

### 1.3 What are the Falls Rules?

By July 2012, each of these jurisdictions will have adopted an initial component of the Falls Rules, the new development regulations. The Falls Rules are intended to improve water quality in Falls Lake. The EPA and State have identified Falls Lake as being an impaired waterbody (Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list), relative to its intended use as a drinking water supply, due to nutrients being deposited by runoff (nutrient loading). This runoff comes from the Falls watershed, in which Granville and Person Counties are located. As with other areas around the state and country facing water quality concerns, it has become the responsibility of those jurisdictions contributing to nutrient loading to limit their negative environmental impacts. Instead of waiting on the federal government to impose one-size-fits-all clean up requirements upon the areas that drain to the lake, Falls Watershed jurisdictions, stakeholders, and state regulators worked together to formulate our own strategy. The jurisdictions have been working with one another and the state for the last five years to negotiate the most favorable rules possible, which were then made effective by the NC Rules Review Commission on January 15, 2011. The rules affect new and existing development, agricultural, sewer, and septic treatment and discharge throughout the watershed. The proposed timeline should have the Lower Falls Lake (near Raleigh's water intake) in compliance within 10 years and the entire lake in compliance within 20 years. The Falls Rules are very stringent, but they are a better alternative than the federally-imposed plan, called a Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL.

### 1.4 How are other jurisdictions involved?

As all five jurisdictions are facing similar stormwater management considerations, they have banded together to form a regional stormwater services organization. The benefits of this cooperation are far-reaching. First and foremost, each jurisdiction will achieve cost savings through sharing staff, technology, and equipment with one another. Furthermore, the support network for stormwater

infrastructure will be improved so service provision and customer relations can be managed seamlessly. As stormwater is by nature a regional concern, the cooperative effort makes sense as the best way to approach management.

### **1.5 Do other areas have stormwater utilities?**

Yes, stormwater utilities are common throughout North Carolina. Large cities like Raleigh, Durham, and Charlotte have stormwater utilities. Stovall, Oxford, and Roxboro, other towns in Granville and Person Counties, also charge their residents and businesses a stormwater fee.

## **2 Stormwater Fee**

### **2.1 Why am I getting a stormwater fee?**

The stormwater fee included in your tax bill is the revenue base for the stormwater utility. This utility is responsible for public services related to stormwater (such as drainage maintenance and flood control) as well as the measures necessary to comply with Falls Rules.

### **2.2 What does the fee revenue fund?**

A small portion of the stormwater fee revenue from each jurisdiction is used to fund administration, technical, and staffing costs associated with running the utility. Across the five jurisdictions, the following major stormwater public services as well as other, more minor, services will also be funded by the stormwater fee:

- Falls- required on-site wastewater system inventories
- Falls Stage I Retrofit Projects
- Water quality related services of environmental health services
- Soil and Water Conservation District surface water quality activities
- Water Supply Watershed Rules compliance
- Water Quality Permit (NPDES Phase II permit) compliance
- Upper Neuse River Basin Association memberships
- Stormwater services manager
- Cooperative lake monitoring

The Falls Rules require an inventory of development since 2006, including the nutrient loading from those areas. From that inventory, measures must be taken to reduce the amount of nutrients in runoff entering Falls Lake (Falls Stage I Retrofit Projects, listed above).

### **2.3 How and when will I be billed?**

Beginning in 2012, the stormwater fee will be included in your annual tax bill sent out by Granville County in July. Owners of multiple properties will receive one bill per parcel.

### **2.4 How are fees calculated?**

There are three components to the fee. First, there is a fixed rate to cover utility administration and certain costs that do not vary by parcel size or impervious area. Establishing a fixed component of the

charge ensures that no one is charged more per unit area to cover these uniform costs. Second, there is a rate based on the gross property area. Though it leads to a lower volume of discharge than impervious area, even pervious land contributes to stormwater runoff and nutrient loading. This is reflected in the gross area charge, without being overly burdensome to large landowners (see below). There are four tiers of gross area charges called blocks. The following table shows the area associated with the four blocks.

Acreage	Blocks
0-2 acres	1 block
2-10 acres	2 blocks
10-100 acres	3 blocks
Over 100 acres	4 blocks

Third, there is a rate for a property's impervious area, to cover costs linked to the amount and quality of runoff from properties. Runoff from impervious area is the most intense, creating high flows and also carrying high concentrations of nutrients downstream, so many costs of stormwater management are tied to impervious area. The impervious area fee for Single Family Residential (SFR) parcels is uniform within Creedmoor, Butner, and Stem. In Granville County, SFR impervious area fees vary by location: within the Falls watershed (Falls) and outside the Falls watershed (non-Falls). Non-SFR properties will be charged for the number of units of impervious area that are on the property. This unit measurement is based on the impervious area of a typical single SFR parcel, or an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU), for homes within the jurisdiction.

These three components are added together to form the total stormwater fee for that individual parcel.

## 2.5 How much will the fee be?

The fee varies based on a parcel's characteristics and by its jurisdiction and location. There are five sets of rates:

- Granville County, Falls
- Granville County, non-Falls
- Butner
- Creedmoor
- Stem

Each set of rates has a three rate components: fixed cost per account, impervious area unit, and gross area block. The fixed cost per account in each of the five areas is uniform for every parcel – every parcel will be charged the same FCPA. In each of the five areas, the single family residential parcels have a uniform impervious area charge (one ERU). The gross area block charge varies for every parcel, depending on how much gross area is on the parcel. The impervious area charge for non-single family residential parcels varies, with each parcel being charged for the measured units of impervious area (or ERUs) on the parcel.

This table shows the costs for each rate component in each of the five areas:

	ERU	FCPA	Fee per ERU	Fee per GA block
Granville Co. (Falls)	4300 sq. ft.	\$ 2	\$ 9	\$ 7
Granville Co. (non-Falls)	4300 sq. ft.	\$ 2	\$ 2	\$ 2
Butner	3100 sq. ft.	\$ 12	\$ 30	\$ 25
Creedmoor	2600 sq. ft.	\$ 12	\$ 70	\$ 25
Stem	2700 sq. ft.	\$ 6	\$ 70	\$ 12

This table shows the fee schedule for the Town of Butner:

<b>Stormwater Utility Rates - Town of Butner</b>				
<b>Single Family Homes on Individual Lots</b>				
Lot Size	Fixed Charge	Gross Area Charge	Impervious Area Charge	Total Annual Charge
House on 0-2 acres	\$12	\$25	\$30	\$67
House on 2-10 acres	\$12	\$50	\$30	\$92
House on 10-100 acres	\$12	\$75	\$30	\$117
House on 100+ acres	\$12	\$100	\$30	\$142
<b>Vacant Land (no home on the lot and less than 500 square feet of impervious surface)</b>				
Lot Size	Fixed Charge	Gross Area Charge	Impervious Area Charge	Total Annual Charge
0-2 acres	\$12	\$25	N/A	\$37
2-10 acres	\$12	\$50	N/A	\$62
10-100 acres	\$12	\$75	N/A	\$87
100+ acres	\$12	\$100	N/A	\$112
<b>Land that is not used as a Single Family Home and with more than 500 square feet of impervious surface</b>				
Lot Size	Fixed Charge	Gross Area Charge	Impervious Area Charge	Total Annual Charge
0-2 acres	\$12	\$25	\$30 per 3,100 square feet or part thereof of impervious surface area on the lot	Varies with impervious surface area
2-10 acres	\$12	\$50		
10-100 acres	\$12	\$75		
100+ acres	\$12	\$100		

## 2.6 How can I get stormwater fee credits?

In support of the stormwater management goals of the utility, owners of properties not classified as Single Family Residential will be eligible to receive credit on their stormwater bill by implementing various types of best management practices. Credits established in time for the 2013 billing cycle may be retroactive to the 2012 bill. More details regarding the credits system will be made available shortly.

## **2.7 What if I am tax-exempt?**

Churches, schools, non-profits, and other select groups within each jurisdiction are exempt from taxes, but are still subject to the stormwater fee. As these groups receive the stormwater services provided, and own properties that contribute to runoff, the allocation of costs in this way is fairer to all. Keep in mind that these groups will remain tax exempt, so the only items that will appear on these properties' bills in Granville County, will be the stormwater fee and the solid waste fee.

## **2.8 Does the fee depend on rain?**

Because many stormwater services are provided regardless of the amount of runoff, there is no variation in the fee due to weather.

# **3 Property**

## **3.1 Will my property be inspected?**

Single family residential properties and property owners that do not seek to receive stormwater credits for BMPs will not have any inspections associated with the fee. Only landowners seeking to receive credit for stormwater best management practices (BMPs) will have their properties inspected. An on-site review of the structure the property owner is seeking credit for is part of the process of credit application approval. Credits will need to be reviewed every 5 years thereafter, and the utility will conduct on-site reviews to ensure that BMPs are being well maintained and continue to function properly.

## **3.2 What if I own more than one parcel?**

Owners of multiple properties will receive one bill per parcel as they do with County taxes.

# **4 More Information**

## **4.1 Where can I find more information?**

More information can be found on the Town of Butner website by July 2012. Should you have any questions regarding the stormwater fee or the billing process, please contact the Granville County Tax Office at (919)693-4181. For more information regarding stormwater regulations in Butner contact Melissa Hodges, Butner Planning Director and Stormwater Administrator at (919)575-3031 or [mhodes@butnernc.org](mailto:mhodes@butnernc.org).