



Rincon, GA

Approaches to Stormwater Management

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COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Rincon, GA is one of the fastest growing communities in the State of Georgia. It is located about twenty (20) miles from downtown Savannah in Effingham County. The city's population was just under 10,000 according to the 2010 census. Rincon charges for services such as water, sewer and garbage, but charges no property taxes. A small, but growing community, Rincon strives to balance affordability for its residents with economic development and environmental protection. To this end, the City has been exploring WaterFirst designation from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). This is a voluntary partnership between the city, state agencies and other organizations to improve the quality of life in a community through the wise management and protection of water resources. The program has the financial incentive of lower interest rates on some state-managed loan programs. Since "Stormwater master planning" is one of the eight (8) components of the WaterFirst designation, the Environmental Finance Center at UNC worked with the community on stormwater management and green infrastructure approaches.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

In March of 2014, staff from the EFC met with the six council members and the city manager. The EFC provided background information on stormwater and its harmful effects on water quality. The community was particularly interested in what other Georgia communities charge for stormwater utility fees. Based on a 2012 study of stormwater utilities across the state, the EFC was able to provide Rincon with an analysis of nine (9) smaller/coastal community stormwater utilities in Georgia. The data presented for these nine (9) communities included the fee per month, the related impervious area and the collection method for the fees. Most of the communities in the study group collected stormwater utility fees on the property tax bill, a significant observation since Rincon does not currently charge a property tax. The research and discussions also included examples of stormwater fee structures, as well as examples of the amount of revenue generated by existing stormwater utilities in Georgia. EFC staff discussed the importance of any stormwater utility having a credit program, as well as the potential for the credit program to generate substantial distributed green infrastructure projects.

NEXT STEPS

Rincon now has a table of the loans and grant options for funding green infrastructure and stormwater management projects. Loans may not be a viable option for the near future of stormwater management since the community does not currently intend to set-up a stormwater utility, and property tax revenue is not a repayment option in this case. While there have been some flooding issues that may eventually call for large-scale stormwater management projects, smaller distributed green projects seem more feasible in the short term. The city is looking into integrating green water management practices into its new development. The City Planner has been very engaged in the process, and in fact initiated the stormwater management discussions with the Manager and Council. She is having discussions with new developers, such as the fast food restaurant that is moving to the city, on including green features.

The City has also collected existing materials on stormwater education and outreach. The city plans to adapt these education templates that were developed by other communities to suit the needs and conditions in Rincon. Educating Rincon citizens about stormwater would be the next step.

More details on the project can be found at <http://www.efc.sog.unc.edu/project/innovative-financing-approaches-stormwater-and-green-infrastructure>

To learn more about stormwater management in Rincon, GA, access the [Approaches to Stormwater Management: Stormwater Utilities and Green Infrastructure](#) white paper presented to the city.

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