



Environment

Prince George's County, Maryland

County, Churches and Nonprofits Rejoice in New Initiative to Save on Stormwater Fees

For Immediate Release: 10/23/2014 12:00 AM

Contact: Linda Lowe, Public Information Officer, Department of the Environment/301-883-5952

County says new program provides groups with incentives to help them go green

LARGO, MD – As part of the County's ongoing effort to reduce stormwater runoff and protect water quality, Prince George's County officials and other special guests officially launched the County's Alternative Compliance Program (ACP) at Forestville New Redeemer Baptist Church in Forestville. The ACP is designed to help congregations and nonprofits reduce and treat stormwater runoff by incorporating best management practices such as building rain barrels and gardens, starting a green team or ministry, coordinating tree plantings and directing community cleanups. Forestville New Redeemer Baptist Church is the first faith-based organization selected to participate in the County program.

Prince George's County Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Economic Development and Public Infrastructure Victor L. Hoskins remarked that he was excited about the County's introduction of the Program. "Prince George's County is taking a major step in making a change toward our environment," said Hoskins. "This public-faith partnership shows what can happen when like-minded people in government and the private sector come together to make a huge change for the better."

Jon Capacasa, Director of the EPA Water Protection Division Mid-Atlantic Region added that backing programs such as the ACP will put us in a much better position in restoring and protecting water quality for the future. "It's important that we continue to explore clean water initiatives that will assist us in meeting the challenges we face ahead," says Capacasa. "I applaud Forestville New Redeemer Baptist Church in stepping out and taking a risk. The EPA is pleased to be here and to be a partner in this effort."

Forestville New Redeemer Baptist Church was selected to receive the County's assistance in retrofitting their property due to the commitment expressed by Pastor Reverend Dr. Nathaniel B. Thomas to be a willing participant in changing attitudes and mindsets about the environment. "We want to do what God wants us to do," said Reverend Thomas. "This is God's property and we must do what we can to not only be a good church, but a good neighbor and good steward."

Prince George's County Department of the Environment Director Adam Ortiz shared how ACP is a true partnership between government and faith-based and nonprofits groups to help improve water quality in our local waterways. "We didn't want to impose significant financial burdens on these organizations," said Ortiz. "So together, we drafted a blueprint of innovative water pollution solutions that would provide tax bill savings, partnerships and grants." Ortiz added that the project at Forestville New Redeemer will serve as a model so other organizations can see what can be done.

Some of the retrofit projects to be installed at Forestville New Redeemer include tree planters, rain barrels, permeable pavers, cistern and bioretention facilities. The project is expected to start construction later this year and will cost the County approximately \$100,000.

The ACP contains three options that provide qualified organizations with a reduction in their Clean Water Act Fee (CWAF). One option provides the County a right-of-entry agreement to install stormwater best management practices (BMPs) on property owned by the organization. This option provides groups with a 50 percent reduction on their CWAF. The second option requires groups to assist the County with their [Rain Check Rebate](#) outreach and education campaign. This initiative raises awareness of water quality issues to the community at large and provides rebates to eligible applicants for installing approved stormwater management practices. In addition, groups agree to create a green ministry to teach the importance of environmental stewardship. Groups that participate in this option can earn a 25 percent reduction in their fee. The third option asks property owners to utilize certified green lawn companies for the proper use and application of fertilizers on their lawns for the protection of water quality. This option also provides a 25 percent reduction.

Tax-exempt religious groups and other 501(c) nonprofit organizations that are interested in the ACP can apply by filling out an application online or by [clicking here](#).

To view photos from the event, [click here](#).

For more information about the County's Rain Check Rebate Program, visit http://www.cbtrust.org/site/c.miJPKXPCJnH/b.9146461/k.6D3F/Prince_George8217s_Rain_Check_Rebate.htm

For more information about the Alternative Compliance Program, visit <http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/sites/StormwaterManagement/CleanWaterActFees/Alternative%20Compliance/Pages/default.aspx>

###