



June 2008

## Rate increase needed to continue progress

The Department of Watershed Management is asking for a four-year package of rate increases that would fund Clean Water Atlanta projects and pay for debt already incurred under the program. The increase for the 2008-2009 fiscal year is higher than expected – 27.5 percent – because of significant revenue losses that resulted from conservation efforts during the drought. The Department realizes the irony – customers are being asked to conserve, but the resulting drop in revenues challenges the City’s ability to continue with the federally mandated Clean Water Atlanta program.

The Department has requested a 15 percent drought surcharge to compensate for the loss of revenue; however, that request has not been acted upon. Institution of the drought surcharge, which would be lifted when the Level 4 drought declaration is lifted, would lower the rate increase requested this year to 14 percent.

This is not a problem limited to Atlanta; cities across the country are struggling with revenue losses because of drought. Across the world, people are beginning to realize that water, the most essential element in our lives, has long been undervalued. Atlanta’s water/sewer rates reflect

an understanding of the value of clean, safe drinking water.

The Department has worked to provide good stewardship of the funds entrusted to it. Through diligent monitoring of some projects and delaying or elimination of some projects that are not federally mandated, the Department has kept increases in the Clean Water Atlanta program to about 1.27 percent over the last five years even though the costs of gasoline, steel, concrete and other construction materials have increased substantially. However, the Department realizes that construction costs will continue to rise, affecting projects that have not started or are in progress.

Clean Water Atlanta projects have dramatically decreased the number of sanitary and combined sewer overflows and improved water pressure in a number of Atlanta communities, and the ongoing sewer evaluation and rehabilitation program is correcting defects in sewer lines across Atlanta. This work is entirely dependent on the City’s ability to repay its bonds. Delaying the program will result in state and federal fines and a lower quality of life for all Atlantans and our downstream neighbors.

## New outdoor watering guidelines in effect

Governor Sonny Perdue has signed legislation that overrides Atlanta’s watering restrictions. As of May 15, the following is allowed:

- Hand-watering for 25 minutes. Hand watering is defined as one person with one garden hose with a spray nozzle that shuts off when it is released;
- Residents who complete the Outdoor Water Use Registration Program ([www.urbanagcouncil.com](http://www.urbanagcouncil.com)) may water newly installed landscaping and newly seeded or aerated lawns for 10 weeks, subject to the same times and days mentioned above; and
- Watering of personal food gardens.

Persons living at even-numbered addresses may water between 12:01 am and 10 am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, and those living at odd-numbered addresses may water between 12:01 am and 10 am on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. The Department of Watershed Management urges customers to be aware that Atlanta is still suffering from a severe drought and to conserve water whenever possible. Check out <http://www.atlantawatershed.org/pdf/WaterSavingTipsWeb.pdf> for water-saving tips.

### Important Numbers to Remember

Customer Service: 404-658-6500  
Customer Service Fax: 404-658-6637  
Customer Service E-mail: [watershedhelp@atlwater.com](mailto:watershedhelp@atlwater.com)





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## LEED-certified multi-family housing project



Atlanta's first LEED-certified multi-family housing development, Oakland Park, has opened in Grant Park on Memorial Drive. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification is awarded to buildings that meet certain standards for energy efficiency and sustainable construction practices and is awarded by the Green Building Council.

In the case of Oakland Park, features such as

sustainable bamboo flooring, low-emittance windows, dual-flush toilets, high-performance plumbing fixtures that reduce water consumption by 30 percent and energy-efficient appliances were major factors in the development's LEED certification.

To further encourage water conservation and personal accountability, Oakland Park offers sub-metering so residents pay for exactly the amount of water they use. For more information about LEED certification, visit <http://www.usgbc.org>.

## City Hall green roof gets a trim

DWM employees donated their lunch hour on May 6 to remove weeds in the green roof that sits atop City Hall outside the cafeteria. Green roofs are layers of soil and plants placed on a waterproof membrane that covers a roof surface. These structures offer many practical benefits such as filtering air pollution, reducing water pollution and stormwater runoff, lowering outdoor temperatures, mitigating "urban heat island" effect and providing additional in-sulation. Green roofs also provide nature habitats in urban areas and adding attractive, usable space to the built environment.



The City's green roof has more than 31 species of plants, layers of soil up to 10 inches deep, and 300 pavers so visitors can enjoy the garden without stepping on the plants.

For more information about the City's green roof, visit [http://www.atlantawatershed.org/bureaus/storm WP Greenroof page1 a.htm](http://www.atlantawatershed.org/bureaus/storm_WP_Greenroof_page1_a.htm).

## Ensuring a happy garden during drought

Gardening and extravagant water usage don't necessarily go together. It is possible to have a healthy, happy garden without using a tremendous amount of water. Consider the following options:

- Choose drought-tolerant plants that are well-suited to this region.
- Confine one-season annuals to a pot or two for color and easy care.
- Build a simple rain barrel to capture rain from your gutters. DWM will soon launch its online rain barrel construction tutorial. Keep checking

our website, [www.atlantawatershed.org](http://www.atlantawatershed.org), for details. Rainwater is great for watering plants, but should not be consumed by people or animals.

- Place a bucket under your air conditioning unit or HVAC drain-off pipe to collect condensation.
- Mulch! Leaves, pine straw, hay and pine chips are excellent choices. Well-mulched plants require less water.

