

## **AN ORDINANCE**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO AMEND SECTIONS 4-91 THROUGH 4-100 INCLUSIVE, ARTICLE III, CHAPTER 4 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF HARRIS COUNTY; TO PROVIDE FOR THE SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION CONTROL IN HARRIS COUNTY; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING LAWS, ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS; TO PROVIDE FOR SEVERABILITY; TO PROVIDE FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER LAWFUL PURPOSES.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF HARRIS COUNTY, GEORGIA AS FOLLOWS:

### **SECTION 1:**

Sections 4-91 through 4-99 of Article III, Chapter 4 Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control of the Code of Ordinances of Harris County, Georgia is hereby amended by deleting Sections 4-91 through 4-100 in its entirety and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

**Section 4.91. TITLE** This ordinance will be known as the "Harris County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance" and shall apply to all unincorporated areas of Harris County, Georgia.

**Section 4.92. DEFINITIONS.** The following definitions shall apply in the interpretation and enforcement of this ordinance, unless otherwise specifically stated:

1. **Best Management Practices (BMP's):** These include sound conservation and engineering practices to prevent and minimize erosion and resultant sedimentation, which are consistent with, and no less stringent than, those practices contained in the "Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia", published by the Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission as of January 1 of the year in which the land-disturbing activity was permitted.
2. **Board:** The Board of Natural Resources.
3. **Buffer:** The area of land immediately adjacent to the banks of state waters in its natural state of vegetation which facilitates the protection of water quality and aquatic habitat.
4. **Certified Personnel:** A person who has successfully completed the appropriate certification course approved by the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission.
5. **Commission:** The Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC).
6. **CPESC:** Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control with current certification by Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control, Inc., a corporation registered in North Carolina, which is also referred to as CPESC or CPESC, Inc.
7. **Cut:** A portion of land surface or area from which earth has been removed or will be removed by excavation; the depth below original ground surface to excavated surface. Also known as excavation.

8. **Department:** The Georgia Department of Natural Resources.
9. **Design Professional:** A professional licensed by the State of Georgia in the field of: engineering, architecture, landscape architecture, forestry, geology, or landsurveying; or a person that is a CPESC.
10. **Director:** The Director of the Environmental Protection Division or an authorized representative.
11. **District:** The Pine Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District.
12. **Division:** The Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of theDepartment of Natural Resources.
13. **Drainage Structure:** A device composed of a virtually nonerodible material such as concrete, steel, plastic or other such material that conveys water from one place toanother by intercepting the flow and carrying it toa release point for storm water management, drainage control, or flood control purposes.
14. **Erosion:** The process by which land surface is worn away by the action of wind, water, ice or gravity.
15. **Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan:** A plan required by the Erosion and Sedimentation Act, O.C.G.A. § 12-7, that includes, as a minimum protections, at least as stringent as the State General Permit, best management practices, and requirements in section 4-94 C of this ordinance.
16. **Fill:** A portion of land surface to which soil or other solid material has been added; the depth above the original ground.
17. **Final Stabilization:** All soil disturbing activities at the site have been completed, and that for unpaved areas and areas not covered by permanent structures and areaslocated outside the waste disposal limits of a landfill cell that has been certified by EPD for waste disposal. 100% of the soil surface is uniformly covered in permanent vegetation with a density of 70% or greater, or equivalent permanent stabilization measures (such as the use of rip rap, gabions, permanent mulches or geotextiles) have been used. Permanent vegetation shall consist of planted trees, shrubs, perennial vines; a crop of perennialvegetation appropriate for the time of year and region; or a crop of annual vegetation and a seeding of target crop perennials appropriate for the region. Final stabilization applies to each phase of construction.
18. **Finished Grade:** The final elevation and contour of the ground after cutting or filling and conforming to the proposed design.
19. **Grading:** Altering the shape of ground surfaces to a predetermined condition; this includes stripping, cutting,filling, stockpiling and shaping or any combination thereofand shall include the land in its cut or filled condition.
20. **Ground Elevation:** The original elevation of the ground surface prior to cutting or filling.
21. **Land-Disturbing Activity:** Any activity which may result in soil erosion from water or wind and the movement of sediment into state waters or onto lands within thestate, including, but not limited to, clearing, dredging, grading, excavating, transporting, and filling of land, butnot including agricultural practices as described in Section 4-93 of this ordinance.
22. **Larger Common Plan of Development or Sale** A contiguous area where multiple separate and distinct construction activities are occurring under one plan of development or sale. For the purposes of this paragraph "plan" means an announcement; piece of documentation such as a sign, public notice or hearing, sales pitch, advertisement, drawing, permit application, zoningrequest, or computer design; or physical demarcation such as boundary signs, lot stakes, or surveyor marking, indicating that construction activities may occur on a specific plot.

23. **Local Issuing Authority:** The governing authority of Harris County pursuant to subsection (a) O.C.G.A. 17-7-8.
24. **Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA):** A state law referenced as O.C.G.A. 12-5-440 et seq., which addresses environmental and developmental matters in certain metropolitan river corridors and their drainage basins.
25. **Natural Ground Surface:** The ground surface in its original state before any grading, excavation or filling.
26. **Nephelometric Turbidity Units (NTU):** Numerical units of measure based upon photometric analytical techniques for measuring the light scattered by finely divided particles of a substance in suspension. This technique is used to estimate the extent of turbidity in water in which colloiddally dispersed or suspended particles are present.
27. **NOI:** A Notice of Intent form provided by EPD for coverage under the State General permit.
28. **NOT:** A Notice of Termination form provided by EPD to terminate coverage under the State General permit.
29. **Operator:** The party or parties that have: (A) operational control of construction project plans and specifications including the ability to make modifications to those plans and specifications; or (B) day-to-day operational control of those activities that are necessary to ensure compliance with an erosion and sedimentation control plan for the site or other permit conditions, such as a person authorized to direct workers at a site to carry out activities required by the erosion and sedimentation control plan or to comply with other permit conditions.
30. **Outfall:** The location where storm water in a discernible, confined and discrete conveyance, leaves a facility or site or, if there is a receiving water on site, becomes a point source discharging into that receiving water.
31. **Permit:** The authorization necessary to conduct a land-disturbing activity under the provisions of this ordinance.
32. **Person:** Any individual, partnership, firm, association, joint venture, public or private corporation, trust, state, commission, board, public or private institution, utility, cooperative, state agency, municipality or other political subdivision of the State of Georgia, any interstate body or any other legal entity.
33. **Phase or Phased:** Sub-parts or segments of construction projects where the sub-part or segment is constructed and stabilized prior to completing construction activities on the entire construction site.
34. **Project:** The entire proposed development project regardless of the size of the area of land to be disturbed.
35. **Properly Designed:** Designed in accordance with the design requirements and specifications contained in the "Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia" (Manual) published by the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission as of January 1 of the year in which the land-disturbing activity was permitted and amendments to the Manual as approved by the Commission up until the date of NOI submittal.
36. **Roadway Drainage Structure:** A device such as a bridge, culvert, or ditch, composed of a virtually nonerodible material such as concrete, steel, plastic, or other such material that conveys water under a roadway by intercepting the flow on one side of a traveled way consisting of one or more defined lanes, with or without shoulder areas, and carrying water to a release point on the other side
37. **Sediment:** Solid material, both organic and inorganic, that is in suspension, is being transported, or has been moved from its site of origin by air, water, ice, or gravity, as a product of erosion.

38. **Sedimentation:** The process by which eroded material is transported and deposited by the action of water, wind, ice or gravity.
39. **Soil and Water Conservation District Approved Plan:** An erosion and sedimentation control plan approved in writing by the Pine Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District.
40. **Stabilization:** The process of establishing an enduring soil cover of vegetation by the installation of temporary or permanent structures for the purpose of reducing to a minimum the erosion process and the resultant transport of sediment by wind, water, ice or gravity.
41. **State General Permit:** The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general permit or permits for storm-water runoff from construction activities as is now in effect or as may be amended or reissued in the future pursuant to the state's authority to implement the same through federal delegation under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended, 33 U.S.C. Section 1251, et seq., and subsection (f) of O.C.G.A. 125-30.
42. **State Waters:** Any and all rivers, streams, creeks, branches, lakes, reservoirs, ponds, drainage systems, springs, wells, and other bodies of surface or subsurface water, natural or artificial, lying within or forming a part of the boundaries of Georgia which are not entirely confined and retained completely upon the property of a single individual, partnership, or corporation.
43. **Structural Erosion and Sedimentation Control Practices:** Practices for the stabilization of erodible or sediment-producing areas by utilizing the mechanical properties of matter for the purpose of either changing the surface of the land or storing, regulating or disposing of runoff to prevent excessive sediment loss. Examples of structural erosion and sediment control practices are riprap, sediment basins, dikes, level spreaders, waterways or outlets, diversions, grade stabilization structures, sediment traps, etc. Such practices can be found in the publication Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia.
44. **Vegetative Erosion and Sedimentation Control Measures:** Measures for the stabilization of erodible or sediment-producing areas by covering the soil with:
  - a. Permanent seeding, sprigging or planting, producing long-term vegetative cover; or
  - b. Temporary seeding, producing short-term vegetative cover; or
  - c. Sodding, covering areas with a turf of perennial sod-forming grass.Such measures can be found in the publication Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia
45. **Watercourse:** Any natural or artificial watercourse, stream, river, creek, channel, ditch, canal, conduit, culvert, drain, waterway, gully, ravine, or wash in which water flows either continuously or intermittently and which has a definite channel, bed and banks, and including any area adjacent thereto subject to inundation by reason of overflow or flood water.
46. **Wetlands:** Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

#### **Section 4-93. EXEMPTIONS.**

This ordinance shall apply to any land-disturbing activity undertaken by any person on any land except for the following:

1. Surface mining, as defined in O.C.G.A. 12-4-72, "The Georgia Surface Mining Act of 1968";
2. Granite quarrying and land clearing for such quarrying;
3. Such minor land-disturbing activities as home gardens and individual home landscaping, repairs, maintenance work, fences, and other related activities which result in minor soil erosion;
4. The construction of single-family residences, when such construction disturbs less than one (1) acre and is not a part of a larger common plan of development or sale with a planned disturbance of equal to or greater than one (1) acre and not otherwise exempted under this paragraph; provided, however, that construction of any such residence shall conform to the minimum requirements as set forth in O.C.G.A. 12-7-6 and this paragraph and shall be enforced by the Local Issuing Authority. Before any land-disturbing activity covered under this subsection begins the property owner must provide at least 48 hours' notice, in writing, to the Harris County Department of Community Development stating that a land-disturbing activity is about to begin and that all BMPs will be followed;
5. Agricultural operations as defined in O.C.G.A. 13-3, "definitions", to include raising, harvesting or storing of products of the field or orchard; feeding, breeding or managing livestock or poultry; producing or storing feed for use in the production of livestock, including but not limited to cattle, calves, swine, hogs, goats, sheep, and rabbits or for use in the production of poultry, including but not limited to chickens, hens and turkeys; producing plants, trees, fowl, or animals; the production of aquaculture, horticultural, dairy, livestock, poultry, eggs and apianian products; farm buildings and farm ponds;
6. Forestry land management practices, including harvesting; provided, however, that when such exempt forestry practices cause or result in land-disturbing or other activities otherwise prohibited in a buffer, as established in paragraph 15 of Section 4-94 C of this ordinance, no other land-disturbing activities, except for normal forest management practices, shall be allowed on the entire property upon which the forestry practices were conducted for a period of three (3) years after completion of such forestry practices;
7. Any project carried out under the technical supervision of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the United States Department of Agriculture;
8. Any project involving less than one (1) acre of disturbed area; provided, however, that this exemption shall not apply to any land-disturbing activity within a larger common plan of development or sale with a planned disturbance of equal to or greater than one (1) acre or within 200 feet of the bank of any state waters, and for purposes of this paragraph, "state waters" excludes channels and drainageways which have water in them only during and immediately after rainfall events and intermittent streams which do not have water in them year-round; provided, however, that any person responsible for a project which involves less than one (1) acre, which involves land-disturbing activity, and which is within 200 feet of any such excluded channel or drainageway, must prevent

sediment from moving beyond the boundaries of the property on which such project is located and provided, further, that nothing contained herein shall prevent the Local Issuing Authority from regulating any such project which is not specifically exempted by paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 or 10 of this section;

9. Construction or maintenance projects, or both, undertaken or financed in whole or in part, or both, by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the Georgia Highway Authority (GHA), or the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA); or any road construction or maintenance project, or both, undertaken by Harris County; provided, however, that construction or maintenance projects of GDOT, GHA, or SRTA which disturb one (1) or more contiguous acres of land shall be subject to provisions of O.C.G.A. 12-7-7.1; except where the GDOT, the GHA, or the SRTA is a secondary permittee for a project located within a larger common plan of development or sale under the state general permit, in which case a copy of a NOI under the state general permit shall be submitted to the Local Issuing Authority, and the Local Issuing Authority shall enforce compliance with the minimum requirements set forth in O.C.G.A. 12-7-6 as if a permit had been issued, and violations shall be subject to the same penalties as violations by permit holders;
10. Any land-disturbing activities conducted by any electric membership corporation or municipal electrical system or any public utility under the regulatory jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission, any utility under the regulatory jurisdiction of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, any cable television system as defined in O.C.G.A. 36-18-1, or any agency or instrumentality of the United States engaged in the generation, transmission, or distribution of power; except where an electric membership corporation or municipal electrical system or any public utility under the regulatory jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission, any utility under the regulatory jurisdiction of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, any cable television system as defined in O.C.G.A. 36-18-1, or any agency or instrumentality of the United States engaged in the generation, transmission or distribution of power is a secondary permittee for a project located within a larger common plan of development or sale under the state general permit, in which case the Local Issuing Authority shall enforce compliance with the minimum requirements set forth in O.C.G.A. 12-7-6 as if a permit had been issued, and violations shall be subject to the same penalties as violations by permit holders; and
11. Any public water system reservoir.

#### **Section 4-94. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL USING BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

##### **A. General Provisions**

Excessive soil erosion and resulting sedimentation can take place during land-disturbing activities. Therefore, plans for those land-disturbing activities which are not exempted by this ordinance shall contain provisions for application of soil erosion and sedimentation control measures and practices. The provisions shall be incorporated into the erosion and sedimentation control plans. Soil erosion and sedimentation control measures and practices shall conform to the minimum requirements of Section 4-94 B & C of this ordinance. The application of measures and

practices shall apply to all features of the site, including street and utility installation, drainage facilities and other temporary and permanent improvements. Measures shall be installed to prevent or control erosion and sedimentation pollution during all stages of any land-disturbing activity in accordance with requirements of this ordinance and the NPDES General Permit.

B. Minimum Requirements/BMPs

1. Best management practices (BMPs) as set forth in Section 4-94 B & C of this ordinance shall be required for all land-disturbing activities. Proper design, installation, and maintenance of BMPs shall constitute a complete defense to any action by the Director or to any other allegation of noncompliance with paragraph (2) of this subsection or any substantially similar terms contained in a permit for the discharge of storm water issued pursuant to subsection (f) of O.C.G.A. 12-5-30, the "Georgia Water Quality Control Act". As used in this subsection, the terms "proper design" and "properly designed" mean designed in accordance with the hydraulic design specifications contained in the "Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia" specified in O.C.G.A 12-7-6 subsection (b).
2. A discharge of storm water runoff from disturbed areas where BMPs have not been properly designed, installed, and maintained shall constitute a separate violation of any land-disturbing permit issued by a Local Issuing Authority or of any state general permit issued by the Division pursuant to subsection (f) of O.C.G.A. 12-5-30, the "Georgia Water Quality Control Act", for each day on which such discharge results in the turbidity of receiving waters being increased by more than twenty-five (25) nephelometric turbidity units for waters supporting warm water fisheries. The turbidity of the receiving waters shall be measured in accordance with guidelines to be issued by the Director. This paragraph shall not apply to any land disturbance associated with the construction of single family homes which are not part of a larger common plan of development or sale unless the planned disturbance for such construction is equal to or greater than five (5) acres.
3. Failure to properly design, install, or maintain BMPs shall constitute a violation of any land-disturbing permit issued by a Local Issuing Authority or of any state general permit issued by the Division pursuant to subsection (f) of O.C.G.A. 12-5-30, the "Georgia Water Quality Control Act", for each day on which such failure occurs.
4. The Director may require, in accordance with regulations adopted by the Board, reasonable and prudent monitoring of the turbidity level of receiving waters into which discharges from land disturbing

activities occur.

5. The Local Issuing Authority may set more stringent buffer requirements than stated in C.15, in light of O.C.G.A. 12-7-6(c).
- C. The rules and regulations, ordinances, or resolutions adopted pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-7-1 et. seq. for the purpose of governing land-disturbing activities shall require, as a minimum, protections at least as stringent as the state general permit; and BMPs, including sound conservation and engineering practices to prevent and minimize erosion and resultant sedimentation, which are consistent with, and no less stringent than, those practices contained in the Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia published by the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission as of January 1 of the year in which the land-disturbing activity was permitted, as well as the following:
1. Stripping of vegetation, regrading and other development activities shall be conducted in a manner so as to minimize erosion;
  2. Cut-fill operations must be kept to a minimum;
  3. Development plans must conform to topography and soil type so as to create the lowest practical erosion potential;
  4. Whenever feasible, natural vegetation shall be retained, protected and supplemented;
  5. The disturbed area and the duration of exposure to erosive elements shall be kept to a practicable minimum;
  6. Disturbed soil shall be stabilized as quickly as practicable;
  7. Temporary vegetation or mulching shall be employed to protect exposed critical areas during development;
  8. Permanent vegetation and structural erosion control practices shall be installed as soon as practicable;
  9. To the extent necessary, sediment in runoff water must be trapped by the use of debris basins, sediment basins, silt traps, or similar measures until the disturbed area is stabilized. As used in this paragraph, a disturbed area is stabilized when it is brought to a condition of continuous compliance with the requirements of O.C.G.A. 12-7-1 et. seq.;
  10. Adequate provisions must be provided to minimize damage from surface water to the cut face of excavations or the sloping surfaces of fills;
  11. Cuts and fills may not endanger adjoining property;
  12. Fills may not encroach upon natural watercourses or constructed channels in a manner so as to adversely affect other property owners;
  13. Grading equipment must cross flowing streams by means of bridges or culverts except when such methods are not feasible, provided, in



any case, that such crossings are kept to a minimum;

14. Land-disturbing activity plans for erosion and sedimentation control shall include provisions for treatment or control of any source of sediments and adequate sedimentation control facilities to retain sediments on-site or preclude sedimentation of adjacent waters beyond the levels specified in Section 4-94 B 2 of this ordinance;
15. There is established a 25 foot buffer along the banks of all state waters, as measured horizontally from the point where vegetation has been wrested by normal stream flow or wave action, except where the Director determines to allow a variance that is at least as protective of natural resources and the environment, where otherwise allowed by the Director pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-2-8, or where a drainage structure or a roadway drainage structure must be constructed, provided that adequate erosion control measures are incorporated in the project plans and specifications, and are implemented; or along any ephemeral stream. As used in this provision, the term "ephemeral stream" means a stream that under normal circumstances has water flowing only during and for a short duration after precipitation events; that has the channel located above the ground-water table year round; for which ground water is not a source of water; and for which runoff from precipitation is the primary source of water flow. Unless exempted as along an ephemeral stream, the buffers of at least 25 feet established pursuant to part 6 of Article 5, Chapter 5 of Title 12, the "Georgia Water Quality Control Act", shall remain in force unless a variance is granted by the Director as provided in this paragraph. The following requirements shall apply to any such buffer:
  - a. No land-disturbing activities shall be conducted within a buffer and a buffer shall remain in its natural, undisturbed state of vegetation until all land-disturbing activities on the construction site are completed. Once the final stabilization of the site is achieved, a buffer may be thinned or trimmed of vegetation as long as a protective vegetative cover remains to protect water quality and aquatic habitat and a natural canopy is left in sufficient quantity to keep shade on the stream bed; provided, however, that any person constructing a single-family residence, when such residence is constructed by or under contract with the owner for his or her own occupancy, may thin or trim vegetation in a buffer at any time as long as protective vegetative cover remains to protect water quality and aquatic habitat and a natural canopy is left in sufficient quantity to keep shade on the

- stream bed; and
- b. The buffer shall not apply to the following land-disturbing activities, provided that they occur at an angle, as measured from the point of crossing, within 25 degrees of perpendicular to the stream; cause a width of disturbance of not more than 50 feet within the buffer; and adequate erosion control measures are incorporated into the project plans and specifications and are implemented; (I) Stream crossings for water lines; or (ii) Stream crossings for sewer lines; and
- D. Nothing contained in O.C.G.A. 12-7-1 et. seq. shall prevent any Local Issuing Authority from adopting rules and regulations, ordinances, or resolutions which contain stream buffer requirements that exceed the minimum requirements in Section 4-94 B & C of this ordinance.
- E. The fact that land-disturbing activity for which a permit has been issued results in injury to the property or another shall neither constitute proof of nor create a presumption of a violation of the standards provided for in this ordinance or the terms of the permit.

#### **Section 4-95. APPLICATION/PERMIT PROCESS**

##### **A. General**

The property owners, developer and designated planners and engineers shall design and review before submittal the general development plans. The Local Issuing Authority shall review the tract to be developed and the area surrounding it. They shall consult the zoning ordinance, storm water management ordinance, subdivision ordinance, flood damage prevention ordinance, this ordinance, and other ordinances, rules, regulations or permits, which regulate the development of land within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Local Issuing Authority. However, the owner and/or operator are the only parties who may obtain a permit.

##### **B. Application Requirements**

1. No person shall conduct any land-disturbing activity within the jurisdictional boundaries of Harris County without first obtaining a permit from the Harris County Department of Community Development to perform such activity and providing a copy of the NOI submitted to EPD if applicable.
2. The application for a permit shall be submitted to the Harris County Department of Community Development and must include the applicant's erosion and sedimentation control plan with supporting data, as necessary. Said plans shall include, as a minimum, the data specified in Section 4-95 C of this ordinance. ~~Soil~~ Erosion and sedimentation control plans, together with supporting data, must

demonstrate affirmatively that the land disturbing activity proposed to be carried out in such a manner that the provisions of Section 4-94 B & C of this ordinance will be met. Applications for a permit will not be accepted unless accompanied by three (3) copies of the applicant's erosion and sedimentation control plans. All applications shall contain a certification stating that the plan preparer or the designee thereof visited the site prior to creation of the plan in accordance with EPD Rule 391-3-7-.10.

3. A permit fee in the amount of One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) shall be charged for application.
4. In addition to the foregoing permitting fees, fees will also be assessed pursuant to paragraph (5) subsection (a) of O.C.G.A. 12-5-23, provided that such fees shall not exceed Eighty Dollars (\$80.00) per acre of land-disturbing activity, and these fees shall be calculated and paid by the primary permittee as defined in the state general permit for each acre of land-disturbing activity included in the planned development or each phase of development. All applicable fees shall be paid prior to issuance of the land disturbance permit. In a jurisdiction that is certified pursuant to subsection (a) of O.C.G.A. 12-7-8 half of such fees levied shall be submitted to the Division; except that any and all fees due from an entity which is required to give notice pursuant to paragraph (9) or (10) of O.C.G.A. 12-7-17 shall be submitted in full to the Division, regardless of the existence of a Local Issuing Authority in the jurisdiction.
5. Immediately upon receipt of an application and plan for a permit, the Local Issuing Authority shall refer the application and plan to the District for its review and approval or disapproval concerning the adequacy of the erosion and sedimentation control pan. The District shall approve or disapprove a plan with thirty-five (35) days of receipt. Failure of the District to act within thirty-five (35) days shall be considered an approval of the pending plan. The results of the District review shall be forwarded to the Local Issuing Authority. No permit will be issued unless the plan has been approved by the District, and any variances required by Section 4-94 C 15 of this ordinance has been obtained, all fees have been paid, and bonding, if required as per Section 4-95 B 7 of this ordinance, have been obtained. Such review will not be required if the Local Issuing Authority and the District have entered into an agreement which allows the Local Issuing Authority to conduct such review and approval of the plan without referring the application and plan to the District. The Local Issuing Authority with plan review authority shall approve or disapprove a revised Plan submitted within thirty-five (35) days

of receipt. Failure of the Local Issuing Authority with plan review authority to act within thirty-five (35) days shall be considered an approval of the revised Plan submittal.

6. If a permit applicant has had two or more violations of previous permits, this ordinance section, or the Erosion and Sedimentation Act, as amended, within three (3) years prior to the date of filing of the application under consideration, the Local Issuing Authority may deny the permit application.
7. A permit applicant is required to post a bond in the form of government security, cash, irrevocable letter of credit, or any combination thereof of One Thousand Five-Hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00) per acre or fraction thereof of the proposed land-disturbing activity, prior to issuing the permit. If the applicant does not comply with this ordinance or with the conditions of the permit after issuance, the Local Issuing Authority may call the bond or any part thereof to be forfeited and may use the proceeds to hire a contractor to stabilize the site of the land-disturbing activity and bring it into compliance. These provisions shall not apply unless there is in effect an ordinance or statute specifically providing for hearing and judicial review of any determination or order of the Local Issuing Authority with respect to alleged permit violations.

#### C. Plan Requirements

1. Plans must be prepared to meet the minimum requirements as contained in Section 4-94 B & C of this ordinance; or through the use of more stringent, alternate design criteria which conform to sound conservation and engineering practices. The Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia is hereby incorporated by reference into this ordinance. The plan for the land-disturbing activity shall consider the interrelationship of the soil types, geological and hydrological characteristics, topography, watershed, vegetation, proposed permanent structures including roadways, constructed waterways, sediment control and storm water management facilities, local ordinances and State laws. Maps, drawings and supportive computations shall bear the signature and seal of the certified design professional. Persons involved in land development design, review, permitting, construction, monitoring, or inspections or any land disturbing activity shall meet the education and training certification requirements, dependent on his or her level of involvement with the process, as developed by the Commission and in consultation with the Division and the Stakeholder Advisory Board created pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-7-20.
2. Data Required for Site Plan shall include all the information required

from the appropriate Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan Review Checklist established by the Commission as of January 1 of the year in which the land-disturbing activity was permitted.

D. Permits

1. Permits shall be issued or denied as soon as practicable but in any event not later than forty-five (45) days after receipt by the Local Issuing Authority of a completed application, providing variances and bonding are obtained, where necessary and all applicable fees have been paid prior to permit issuance. The permit may include conditions under which the activity may be undertaken.
2. No permit shall be issued by the Local Issuing Authority unless the erosion and sedimentation control plan has been approved by the District and the Local Issuing Authority has affirmatively determined that the plan is in compliance with this ordinance, any variances required by Section 4-94 C 15 of this ordinance are obtained, bonding requirements, if necessary, as per Section 4-95 B 7 of this ordinance are met and all ordinances and rules and regulations in effect within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Local Issuing Authority are met. If the permit is denied, the reason for denial shall be furnished to the applicant.
3. Any land-disturbing activities by a Local Issuing Authority shall be subject to the same requirements of this ordinance, and any other ordinances relating to land development, as are applied to private persons and the division shall enforce such requirements upon the Local Issuing Authority.
4. If the tract is to be developed in phases, then a separate permit shall be required for each phase.
5. The permit may be suspended, revoked, or modified by the Local Issuing Authority, as to all or any portion of the land affected by the plan, upon finding that the holder or his successor in the title is not in compliance with the approved erosion and sedimentation control plan or that the holder or his successor in title is in violation of this ordinance. A holder of a permit shall notify any successor in title to him as to all or any portion of the land affected by the approved plan of the conditions contained in the permit.
6. No permit shall be issued unless the applicant provides a statement by the county tax commissioner's office certifying that all ad valorem taxes levied against the property and due and owing have been paid. The Local Issuing Authority may reject a permit application if the applicant has had two (2) or more violations of previous permits or the Erosion and Sedimentation Act permit requirements within three (3) years prior to the date of the application, in light of O.C.G.A.

**Section 4-96 INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT**

- A. The Harris County Department of Community Development will periodically inspect the sites of land-disturbing activities for which permits have been issued to determine if the activities are being conducted in accordance with the plan and if the measures required in the plan are effective in controlling erosion and sedimentation. Also, the Local Issuing Authority shall regulate ~~both~~ primary, secondary and tertiary permittees as such terms are defined in the state general permit. Primary permittees shall be responsible for installation and maintenance of BMPs where the primary permittee is conducting land-disturbing activities. Secondary permittees shall be responsible for installation and maintenance of best management practice where the secondary permittee is conducting land-disturbing activities. Tertiary permittees shall be responsible for installation and maintenance where the tertiary permittee is conducting land-disturbing activities. If, through inspection, it is deemed that a person engaged in land disturbing activities as defined herein has failed to comply with the approved plan, with permit conditions, or with the provisions of this ordinance, a written notice to comply shall be served upon that person. The notice shall set forth the measures necessary to achieve compliance and shall state the time within which such measures must be completed. If the person engaged in the land-disturbing activity fails to comply within the time specified, he shall be deemed in violation of this ordinance.
- B. The Local Issuing Authority must amend its ordinances to the extent appropriate within twelve (12) months of any amendments to the Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975.
- C. The Harris County Department of Community Development shall have the power to conduct such investigations as it may reasonably deem necessary to carry out duties as prescribed in this ordinance, and for this purpose to enter at reasonable times upon any property, public or private, for the purpose of investigation and inspecting the sites of land-disturbing activities.
- D. No person shall refuse entry or access to any authorized representative or agent of the Local Issuing Authority, the Commission, the District, or Division who requests entry for the purposes of inspection, and who presents appropriate credentials, nor shall any person obstruct, hamper or interfere with any such representative while in the process of carrying out his official duties.
- E. The District or the Commission or both shall semi-annually review the actions of counties which have been certified as Local Issuing

Authorities pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-7-8(a). The District or the Commission or both may provide technical assistance to any county for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of the county's erosion and sedimentation control program. The District or the Commission shall notify the Division and request investigation by the Division if any deficient or ineffective local program is found.

- F. The Division may periodically review the actions of counties which have been certified as Local Issuing Authorities pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-7-8(a). Such review may include, but shall not be limited to, review of the administration and enforcement of a governing authority's ordinance and review of conformance with an agreement, if any, between the district and the governing authority. If such review indicates that the governing authority of any county certified pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-7-8(a) has not administered or enforced its ordinances or has not conducted the program in accordance with any agreement entered into pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-7-7(e), the Division shall notify the governing authority of the county in writing. The governing authority of any county so notified, shall have ninety (90) days within which to take the necessary corrective action to retain certification as a Local Issuing Authority. If the county does not take necessary corrective action within ninety (90) days after notification by the division, the division shall revoke the certification of the county as a Local Issuing Authority.

#### **Section 4-97. PENALTIES AND INCENTIVES**

##### **A. Failure to Obtain a Permit for Land-Disturbing Activity**

If Any person commences any land-disturbing activity requiring a land-disturbing permit as prescribed in this ordinance without first obtaining said permit, the person shall be subject to revocation of his business license, work permit or other authorization for the conduct of a business and associated work activities within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Local Issuing Authority.

##### **B. Stop-Work Orders**

1. For the first and second violations of the provisions of this ordinance, the Director or the Local Issuing Authority shall issue a written warning to the violator. The violator shall have five (5) days to correct the violation. If the violation is not corrected within five (5) days, the Director or the Local Issuing Authority shall issue a stop-work order requiring that land-disturbing activities be stopped until necessary corrective action or mitigation has occurred; provided, however, that if the violation presents an

imminent threat to public health or waters of the state or if the land-disturbing activities are conducted without obtaining the necessary permit, the Director or the Local Issuing Authority shall issue an immediate stop-work order in lieu of a warning;

2. For a third and each subsequent violation, the Director or the Local Issuing Authority shall issue an immediate stop-work order; and;
3. All stop-work orders shall be effective immediately upon issuance and shall be in effect until the necessary corrective action or mitigation has occurred.
4. When a violation in the form of taking action without a permit, failure to maintain a stream buffer, or significant amounts of sediment, as determined by the Local Issuing Authority or by the Director or his or her designee, have been or are being discharged into state waters and where BMPs have not been properly designed, installed, and maintained, a stop work order shall be issued by the Local Issuing Authority or by the Director or his or her designee. All such stop-work orders shall be effective immediately upon issuance and shall be in effect until the necessary corrective action or mitigation has occurred. Such stop-work orders shall apply to all land-disturbing activity on the site with the exception of the installation and maintenance of temporary or permanent erosion and sediment controls.

C. Bond Forfeiture

If, through inspection, it is determined that a person engaged in land-disturbing activities has failed to comply with the approved plan, a written notice to comply shall be served upon that person. The notice shall set forth the measures necessary to achieve compliance with the plan and shall state the time within which such measures must be completed. If the person engaged in the land-disturbing activity fails to comply within the time specified, he shall be deemed in violation of this ordinance and, in addition to other penalties, shall be deemed to have forfeited his performance bond, if required to post one under the provisions of Section 4-95 B 7 of this ordinance. The Local Issuing Authority may call the bond or any part thereof to be forfeited and may use the proceeds to hire a contractor to stabilize the site of the land-disturbing activity and bring it into compliance.

D. Monetary Penalties

Any person who violates any provisions of this ordinance, or any permit condition of limitation established pursuant to this ordinance, or who negligently or intentionally fails or refuses to comply with any final or emergency order of the Director issued as provided in this ordinance



shall be liable for a civil penalty not to exceed Two Thousand Five-Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) per day. Notwithstanding any limitation of law as to penalties which can be assessed for violations of county ordinances, any magistrate court or any other court of competent jurisdiction trying cases brought as violations of this ordinance under county ordinances approved under this ordinance shall be authorized to impose penalties for such violations not to exceed Two Thousand Five-Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) for each violation. Each day during which violation or failure or refusal to comply continues shall be a separate violation.

#### **Section 4-98. EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION**

- A. Persons involved in land development design, review, permitting, construction, monitoring, or inspection or any land-disturbing activity shall meet the education and training certification requirements, depending on their level of involvement with the process, as developed by the Commission in consultation with the Division and the stakeholder advisory board created pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-7-20.
- B. For each site on which land-disturbing activity occurs, each entity or person acting as either a primary, secondary, or tertiary permittee, as defined in the state general permit, shall have as a minimum one (1) person who is in responsible charge of erosion and sedimentation control activities on behalf of said entity or person and meets the applicable education or training certification requirements developed by the Commission present on site whenever land-disturbing activities are conducted on that site. A project site shall herein be defined as any land-disturbing site or multiple site within a larger common plan of development or compliance with the state general permit.
- C. Persons or entities involved in projects not requiring a state general permit but otherwise requiring certified personnel on site may contract with certified persons to meet the requirements of this ordinance.
- D. If a state general permittee who has operational control of land-disturbing activities for a site has met the certification requirements of paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of O.C.G.A. 12-7-19, then any person or entity involved in land-disturbing activity at that site and operating in a subcontractor capacity for such permittee shall meet those educational requirements specified in paragraph (4) of subsection (b) of O.C.G.A. 12-7-19 and shall not be required to meet any educational requirements that exceed those specified in said paragraph.

#### **Section 4-99. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL JUDICIAL REVIEW**

##### **A. Administrative Remedies**

The suspension, revocation, modification or grant with condition of a permit by the Local Issuing Authority upon finding that the holder is not in compliance with the approved erosion and sediment control plan; or that the holder is in violation of permit conditions; or that the holder is in violation of any ordinance; shall entitle the person submitting the plan or holding the permit to a hearing before the Harris County Board of Commissioners within thirty (30) days after receipt by the Local Issuing Authority of written notice of appeal.

B. Judicial Review

Any person, aggrieved by a decision or order of the Local Issuing Authority, after exhausting his administrative remedies, shall have the right to appeal denovo to the Superior Court of Harris County.

**Section 4-100. LIABILITY**

- A. Neither the approval of a plan under the provisions of this ordinance, nor the compliance with provisions of this ordinance shall relieve any person from the responsibility for damage to any person or property otherwise imposed by law nor impose any liability upon the Local Issuing Authority or District for damage to any person or property.
- B. The fact that a land-disturbing activity for which a permit has been issued results in injury to the property of another shall neither constitute proof of nor create a presumption of a violation of the standards provided for in this ordinance or the terms of the permit.
- C. No provision of this ordinance shall permit any persons to violate the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975, the Georgia Water Quality Control Act or the rule and regulations promulgated and approved thereunder or pollute any Waters of the State as defined thereby.

**SECTION 2: UNCONSTITUTIONALITY**

If any part section, paragraph, clause, phrase or provision of this ordinance shall be adjudged invalid or held unconstitutional, such decisions shall not affect the remaining portions of this ordinance.

**SECTION 3: REPEALER**

All laws, ordinances, resolutions or part thereof which conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

**SECTION 4: EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Ordinance shall become effective upon its approval by the Board of Commissioners of Harris County

INTRODUCED AND FIRST READING:	September 7, 2010
INTRODUCED AND SECOND READING:	September 21, 2010
ADOPTED / <del>REJECTED</del> :	October 5, 2010

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

/s/ J. Harry Lange, Chairman  
/s/ Joey M. Loudermillk, Vice-Chairman

/s/ Joe F. Manning, Commissioner  
/s/ Patrick Whearley, Commissioner  
/s/ Charles Wyatt, Commissioner

Attest:  
/s/ Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk

