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**MINNESOTA DEVELOPS NEW OPTION FOR PROPERTY OWNERS, MUNICIPALITIES AND OTHERS TO SAVE MILLIONS BY INSTALLING TREES FOR STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**

*FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND STORMWATER CREDITING SYSTEM ALLOWS COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES TO MEASURE POTENTIAL OF TREES TO MANAGE STORMWATER*

**San Francisco, CA** – The state of Minnesota has just developed a first-of-its kind formula and credit system that is transforming the way communities think about trees and stormwater management -- and can potentially help them save millions by investing in trees rather than pipes. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency created the credit system as part of a new chapter on trees in their stormwater manual, which also provides recommendations on how to ensure that trees thrive and provide the maximum ecological benefits for planners, developers, landscape architects, and builders.

“To our knowledge, Minnesota is one of the first states, if not the first, to add a chapter on trees to its manual, as well as add analysis on the stormwater benefits of tree and soil systems,” said Nathalie Shanstrom, a landscape architect with the Kestrel Design Group who led the efforts to develop the credit system. “While trees have always provided stormwater benefits, they are just recently starting to be recognized by regulators as viable stormwater control measures. Cities and states are taking notice.”

The federal Clean Water Act imposes requirements on stormwater discharges from specific municipal, construction and industrial activities. Trees can help communities and other regulated entities meet these requirements while mitigating the high cost of only installing pipes.

“The state wants to incentivize the planting and maintaining of trees – and we want to ensure that people do it right so that the trees can provide the maximum level of stormwater benefits,” stated XXXXX of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. “We are excited about Minnesota’s leadership and the opportunities we are providing to the local communities that have to manage their stormwater runoff.”

The new credit system is part of Minnesota’s Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS), which focuses on treating rain where it falls to minimize negative impacts from stormwater runoff and to preserve natural resources. The credit is based on a formula that establishes criteria and methods to measure the benefits of evapotranspiration, which is the combination of water evaporating from the soil and transpiration from the plants growing in the soil.

An additional focus of the Minnesota stormwater manual is the importance of planting trees properly with adequate soil volumes, even in urban areas. The manual recommends soil requirements of two cubic feet of soil for a square foot of canopy area – which is the minimum for a healthy tree. Tree size is crucial for maximizing stormwater benefits. For trees that are planted and maintained correctly and provided with adequate soil volume, the state is therefore giving credits based on the projected mature canopy size as soon as the tree is planted. If a tree is planted with less soil than it needs, the credit is reduced.

"Trees are the oldest form of green infrastructure in cities, but the urban forest is now broken,” said Peter Macdonagh, of Kestrel Design Group. “Planting trees in appropriate quantities of good soil and using stormwater and its nutrients to irrigate is beneficial to the urban forest and reduces city taxes by tens of millions of dollars. Minnesota's visionary rule incentivizing correct tree-planting to manage urban stormwater will clean our lakes, rivers and oceans to be safely swimmable and fishable."

Cities like Minneapolis, which do not have the space for open planters due to concrete and pavement, have already begun to invest in innovative solutions to attain the greatest stormwater credit possible. Through the use of products like the Silva Cell, which creates an underground framework that provides soil access to support long-term tree growth, the city is planting achieving the proper soil volume.

“States as diverse as Washington, Texas and Minnesota are looking for smart solutions that help them address stormwater management, and the Silva Cell system is the perfect tool,” stated Graham Ray, CEO of DeepRoot. “Depending on the size and design of the system, thousands of gallons of runoff can be prevented from entering, overwhelming or polluting sewers, creeks and adjacent watersheds. As more urban centers realize that they can save millions through the use of trees, we anticipate more people will turn to solutions like the Silva Cell.”

The new approach that Minnesota is taking is also leading to economic, ecological and community benefits to local residents.  Communities can benefit from planting large, mature trees in ways that go beyond stormwater. Trees lead to lower vacancy rates in business developments and also help reduce crime. Trees also have big health benefits and they serve as “nature’s air conditioners” in the hot summer.

As states look to alternative solutions to manage stormwater effectively, Minnesota and its new credit systems are showing what can be done through simple formulas and technology that help incentivize sustainable, tree-filled communities.

To learn more about the new Minnesota stormwater credit, visit: <http://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/Calculating_credits_for_tree_trenches_and_tree_boxes>

To learn more about the Silva Cell, please visit: <http://bit.ly/silvacell>

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**About DeepRoot:** For nearly 40 years, DeepRoot has helped cities, designers, planners, contractors and communities find solutions that help them build the livable cities that they desire. Our mission is to create a more livable built environment by using green infrastructure like trees, soil, and on-site stormwater management. With locations in the U.S., Canada and the UK, we are expanding solutions to enhance urban landscapes in city streets, parking lots, campuses, and other heavily-paved areas. Learn more at DeepRoot’s new website, [www.deeproot.com](http://www.deeproot.com/)