



Orange Water and Sewer Authority

OWASA is Carrboro-Chapel Hill's not-for-profit public service agency delivering high quality water, wastewater, and reclaimed water services.

October 26, 2022

Mayor Pam Hemminger
Town of Chapel Hill
405 Martin Luther King Jr.
Blvd Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Mayor Damon Seils
Town of Carrboro
301 West Main Street
Carrboro, NC 27510

Chair Renee Price
Orange County Board of
Commissioners
Post Office Box 8181
Hillsborough, NC 27278

Dear Mayor Hemminger, Mayor Seils, and Chair Price:

We are pleased to submit this report on our services, projects, and initiatives since August 2022. This report includes information on the following items:

1. Standard Collection Practices
2. Lead and Copper Rule
3. PFAS Monitoring
4. Strategic Plan
5. Care to Share Day
6. Diversity and Inclusion
7. Forest Management
8. Western Intake Partnership
9. Key Infrastructure Investments

Standard Collection Practices:

Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) resumed Standard Collection Practices on June 1, 2022, following the expiration of the declared Orange County State of Emergency that had been in place since March 2020.

Under OWASA's Standard Collection Practices, a customer is subject to service disconnection if they have a bill that is more than 60 days past due. Service disconnections resumed in October, and the OWASA Team attempted to reach every customer who had bills that were more than 60 days past due. The OWASA Team worked to connect those customers with funding assistance and payment plan information.

OWASA also submitted applications to the Town of Carrboro, Town of Chapel Hill, and Orange County for consideration of using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to cover the past-due balances of OWASA customers in each of those jurisdictions that were accrued while the Orange County State of Emergency was in place. On October 18, 2022, the Carrboro Town Council approved a grant of approximately \$50,000 to cover past-due balances of Carrboro residents. Customers are not being disconnected for their COVID-accumulated water bill debt as we await a response to these requests.

As we move forward, we will continue working with customers who have bills that are past due to help connect them with funding assistance and any available options to make payments while keeping their service connected.

Thank you to each of the local government jurisdictions for your consideration of OWASA's ARPA proposals to assist residents with debt accrued during the local State of Emergency.

Lead and Copper Rule:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established new guidelines to reduce potential lead exposure from drinking water with a revised rule that went into effect in December 2021. The OWASA Team is continuing work toward compliance with this new rule by October 2024.

OWASA has engaged with a consultant, CDM Smith, to help prepare us to comply with the revisions. Our initial focus is on creating an inventory of pipe material making up both the public and private buried drinking water service lines. This process has been started using historical information and OWASA's internal data to make best determinations. As the inventory is finalized, a plan will be developed to identify any remaining unknown information.

OWASA will continue working with regional utility partners to collaborate on efficient and effective methods so that we all can work in the best interest of our customers. OWASA will be in contact with customers as further updates are available.

Members of the OWASA Team also continue working with officials at UNC – Chapel Hill as the University is investigating the cause of some lead detections at different fountains and fixtures on campus. OWASA is assisting with technical information and guidance to UNC, as well as [publishing information on our website](#) for the community in general as we do not believe there is a threat of lead being present in drinking water across the community.

PFAS Monitoring:

The EPA announced updated health advisory levels on June 15, 2022, for four compounds in drinking water that are part of a group of compounds called PFAS. OWASA's August 2022 Quarterly Report included information about this announcement. We have also shared information with the community about these new levels.

These new levels are orders of magnitude lower than previous health advisory limits. The new levels are not regulatory, but the water industry is expecting the announcement of proposed regulatory levels later this year.

Since the June announcement by the EPA, we have updated our [PFAS Monitoring Program page of the OWASA website](#) that houses monitoring data going back to 2018. The results currently reported on the dashboard are for Cane Creek Reservoir water, finished drinking water, as well as the influent and effluent water to and from the Wastewater Treatment Plant. We are expanding

our monitoring program to include University Lake, the Quarry Reservoir, feeder streams to Cane Creek Reservoir, and wastewater biosolids.

We are currently considering qualifications for consultants in response to [an RFQ posted in September 2022](#) to assist OWASA as we move forward on this topic.

The science and regulations for PFAS are changing relatively quickly, and we want to ensure that our community is informed of what we know when we know it. An email list has been created to keep those interested in PFAS-related developments from OWASA informed on Board actions and next steps; anyone can register for this list [here](#). If you receive questions or comments regarding PFAS in the local water supply, please send those questions to OWASA and we will assist in answering.

OWASA's Board of Directors is scheduled to receive an update from OWASA staff on this issue at the meeting scheduled for November 10, 2022.

Strategic Plan:

The OWASA Board of Directors voted to approve a new strategic plan at the meeting on September 8, 2022.

The new strategic plan was developed following a broadly focused scan with input from the community, OWASA Team members, and multiple stakeholder sessions with local partners. The new plan will guide OWASA's investments and resources for the next five years to ensure OWASA is anticipating and preparing well for the future and advancing community priorities.

The priorities identified as part of the strategic plan development are:

- Employee recruitment, retention, and development
- Equitable services
- Climate and land use change adaptation
- Community engagement
- Emergency management and cybersecurity
- Service reliability and resiliency

The plan includes goals and initiatives developed for each of these priorities over the next five years. We are developing an implementation plan and are excited to work with the community in advancing each of these priorities in the coming years.

You can view the approved strategic plan [here](#).

Care to Share Day:

Care to Share Day is an annual event to promote and raise funds for the Care to Share bill-assistance program for OWASA customers. The Care to Share program is administered in partnership with the Inter-Faith Council for Social Service (IFC) and provides up to \$200 of water bill assistance to OWASA customers with financial need.

OWASA customers can donate on their monthly bill, and anyone can donate directly to the IFC. One hundred percent of the donations made are used to help cover the costs of water and sewer services for members of our community.

OWASA will celebrate Care to Share Day on November 17, 2022. Events leading up to Care to Share Day will include OWASA tabling at the Thanks + Giving Food Truck Rodeo being put on by Chapel Hill Community Arts & Culture, messages on OWASA's social media channels, and a dedicated segment of OWASA's Wonderful Water series on WCHL.

We are grateful for assistance from local government partners and elected officials to promote Care to Share Day; OWASA staff will be reaching out to local government staff ahead of the event to coordinate any messaging campaigns.

Diversity and Inclusion:

Promoting diversity and inclusion is a top priority for OWASA, which has had an active Diversity and Inclusion Program since 2016.

The OWASA Board of Directors received the annual Equal Employment Opportunity Report for Fiscal Year 2022 as well as a general update on diversity and inclusion efforts at the meeting on September 8, 2022.

In addition to trainings and other efforts to improve diversity and inclusion among the OWASA Team, efforts have remained focused on recruiting employees from a variety of backgrounds when OWASA has position openings. For the reporting period ending June 30, 2022, OWASA saw a 2.6% increase in racial minority representation among the workforce from the previous reporting period.

Recruiting for a Diversity and Inclusion Specialist to be added to the OWASA Team will begin in early 2023. A work group has also been formed with members of all three diversity groups within OWASA (Diversity Leadership, Diversity Resource, and Diversity Recruitment groups). This work group will be focused on developing guiding principles for the overall Diversity and Inclusion program, evaluating the effectiveness of the three current groups against OWASA's overall objectives, and reviewing our diversity and inclusion metrics and their usefulness.

Forest Management:

OWASA owns approximately 2,400 acres of forested lands, the majority of which are in the Cane Creek Reservoir watershed. OWASA has seven guiding principles for the forest management program:

- Protect water quality
- Improve ecological health of forested land
- Reduce the risk of wildfire
- Improve wildlife habitat and species diversity

- Sustainably manage OWASA's resources
- Engage the community and partner agencies
- Minimize adverse impacts on neighbors and surrounding community

Forest management activities in Fiscal Year 2022 included completing draft stewardship plans for the Teer West property on Flat Rock Road, as well as beginning work on the Meadow Crest North and Meadow Crest South properties located on either side of Teer Road.

Additional activities are planned for Fiscal Year 2023 that include additional surveying work, community engagement with neighbors, planting shortleaf pine in some locations, and establishing firelines for future prescribed burns.

Western Intake Partnership:

The OWASA Board of Directors approved the updated Long-Range Water Supply Plan on July 14, 2022. As part of this newly approved plan, the OWASA Board has authorized additional collaboration between OWASA and regional partners (the City of Durham, the Town of Pittsboro, and Chatham County) making up the Western Intake Partnership (WIP).

This partnership is in the early stages, and OWASA will continue providing updates to the community as it progresses. OWASA and the rest of the WIP were each recently awarded ARPA funding to go toward planning studies associated with accessing source water in Jordan Lake.

OWASA's involvement with the WIP to this point includes investing in planning, permitting, and design projects to access water from Jordan Lake. As part of this limited partnership, the Jordan Lake water treatment facility and other project components may be built on OWASA-owned property in Chatham County.

Key Infrastructure Investments:

Several large projects investing in the community's water and wastewater infrastructure are either recently completed, underway, or soon to begin.

OWASA's contractor is continuing work on the second phase of the West Cameron Avenue water line replacement project. The initial phase of the project was completed in August 2020 in the intersection of West Cameron Avenue and Columbia Street. Phase 2 is replacing water lines roughly from Pittsboro Street to Merritt Mill Road. The OWASA Team has been coordinating with partners at the Town of Chapel Hill and UNC throughout this project and will continue to do so. Work is expected to be completed on this project in early 2023.

A significant water line improvement project at the Jones Ferry Road Water Treatment Plant (WTP) was completed since the August 2022 update to this group. This work added resiliency to our water distribution system and will help OWASA maintain a high level of service for our customers.

Rehabilitation efforts are also underway on the biosolids process at the Mason Farm Wastewater Treatment Plant. These improvements will increase the resiliency of the biosolids process to support the community's wastewater treatment and recycling.

Throughout the service area, OWASA construction crews are making progress on several smaller water line replacement projects in neighborhoods and OWASA contractors are working on rehabilitating sewers.

You can track the status of OWASA's capital projects through a dynamic map [on the OWASA website](#).

We would be happy to provide more detailed information on the items above or other topics of interest as desired. Please feel free to contact our Executive Director, Todd Taylor (ttaylor@owasa.org or 919-537-4216), or me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Boehm". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bruce Boehm, Chair
Board of Directors

Attachments

c: Mr. Richard White III, Carrboro Town Manager
Ms. Bonnie Hammersley, Orange County Manager
Mr. Maurice Jones, Chapel Hill Town Manager
OWASA Board of Directors
Todd Taylor, OWASA Executive Director

MONTHLY SUMMARY OF CALLS AND E-MAILS TO OWASA
FROM NEIGHBORS REPORTING ODOR
FROM THE MASON FARM WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	11	3	9	0	8	3	8	1	3	3	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
February	7	5	2	0	8	0	4	1	0	3	3	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
March	9	0	7	1	10	4	1	1	0	2	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
April	9	2	4	0	9	3	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May	6	0	2	5	8	3	2	5	4	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
June	4	1	1	1	5	1	8	8	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
July	1	0	2	0	0	2	6	3	2	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
August	1	0	4	3	11	2	9	0	1	1	2	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
September	2	5	2	2	9	3	1	1	5	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
October	2	6	1	1	8	8	2	0	3	3	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
November	0	0	1	7	2	6	7	1	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
December	3	3	2	5	8	10	2	1	1	6	3	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
TOTAL	55	25	37	25	86	45	51	23	23	30	27	11	17	3	0	2	3	0	1	0	

January-2002 to December-2022 History and Present (2022)

An “odor event” is defined as: One or more odor reports received during a 24 hour period from WWTP neighbor(s). Each odor event shall be considered to be “verified” unless OWASA determines conclusively that an alternative source other than the WWTP created the odor.

**LOG OF CALLS AND E-MAILS TO OWASA
FROM NEIGHBORS REPORTING ODOR IN THE MASON FARM
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (WWTP) AREA**

January 2022 – December 2022

Date call received	Time call received	Location
January 2022	No Reported Odors	N/A
February 2022	No Reported Odors	N/A
March 2022	5:15 pm	101 Old Mason Farm rd
April 2022	No Reported Odors	N/A
May 2022	No Reported Odors	N/A
June 2022	No Reported Odors	N/A
July 2022	No Reported Odors	N/A
August 2022	No Reported Odors	N/A
September 2022	No Reported Odors	N/A
October 2022		
November 2022		
December 2022		

DISTRIBUTION OF OWASA E-MAILS ABOUT OFF-SITE ODOR ELIMINATION

Location	Name
Highland Woods	Paul Neebe
	Mary Turner
	Malcolm Forbes
	Natalia Lebedeva
	Gary Richman
	Gail Wood
	Robert and Melissa Porter
	Robin Casey
	Joseph Clancy
	Ann Schwab
	Seth Kingsbury
	Amanda Kingsbury
	Freeman and Angela Kirby
	Reed Johnson
	Kay Johnson
	Rex Bartles
	Lisa Bartles
	Ann Alexander
	Nortin Hadler
	Carol Hadler
	Frank P. Rexford
	Scott Brees
	Kendall Brees
	Rainer Blaesius
	Elisabeth Schweins
	Susannah Shearer
	Fred Hall
	Lawanda Rainey-Hall
	Katie Jamieson
	Richard Harrill
	Angel Smith
	Jordon Sharome
	Cameron Williams
Marian Rice	
Janet McLamb	
Michael Henning	
Benjamin Duan-Porter	
Matthew Mauck	
Finley Forest	Adam Kimplead
	Cindy Underwood
	Dan Puckett
	David J. Polewka
	Kathryn Conard
Laurel Hill	Michael Sharpe
	Julie Maness
	Bob Wendell
	Carol David

Location	Name
	Pat Evans
	Ewan Rodewald and Sharon Hodge
	Marcella Grendler
	Kay Goldstein
	Ann Wilson
	Louis Fogleman
St. Thomas More Church and School	St. Thomas More Church staff
Morgan Creek area	Ellen Johnson
	Aldersgate United Methodist Church
	Betsy Malpass
	Hanson Malpass
	Jeannie Cox
	Laura King Moore
	Jeanne Langley
	AW Carr
	Marilyn and Don Hartman
	Robert Huls
Ronald McDonald House Family House	Shelly Day
	Greg Kirkpatrick, Executive Director
	Janice Ross, Operations Manager
	Matt Hapgood
Reserve	Steve McPhail
	James F. Howard
	Steven and Susan Frye
	Doug Longman
	Barbara and Edward Paradise
	Jeanne and David Jarrett
	Nadine O'Malley
	Mark Witcher
	Ralph Abrahams
	Kathy Abrahams
Bayberry Drive area UNC	William Ware
	Johnny Randall, NC Botanical Garden
	Jennifer Peterson, NC Botanical Garden
	Phil Barner, Energy Services Director
	Margaret Holton, Water, Sewer & Stormwater Coordinator
	Mary Beth Koza, Director, Environment, Health and Safety
	Ross Fowler, Finley Golf Course
	Michael Wilkinson, golf pro
	Andrew Sapp, Men's Golf Coach
	UNC Tennis Center
	UNC parking
	Mike McFarland, University Communications
	Scott Ragland, News Services
	Linda Convissor, Director of Local Relations
	UNC Farm (Faculty Staff Recreation Association)
	Frank Maynard, Athletics/ Finley Golf Course

Distribution of OWASA E-mails About Off-Site Odor Elimination

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Location	Name
	Robert Costa, Athletics/ Finley Golf Course
	Mark Steffer, Athletics/ Finley Golf Course
	Jeff McCracken, Public Safety
	Kate Luck
UNC Healthcare	Mel Hurston
	Karen McCall
	Keith Morris
Town of Chapel Hill	Maurice Jones, Town Manager
	Florentine A. Miller, Deputy Town Manager
	Ann Anderson, Town Attorney
	Lance Norris, Public Works Director
	Chris Roberts, Town Engineer
	Richard Terrell, Public Works Operations Superintendent
	Jeanne Brown, Assistant to the Mayor
	Sheila Stains-Ramp, Development Services Planning
	Sabrina Oliver, Town Clerk
	Amy Harvey, Public Affairs and Communications
	Chris Blue, Police Chief
	Bryan Walker, Captain/Police Information
	Josh Mecimore, Police Information Officer
	Allison Weakley
	Kiel Harms
	Ran Northam, Interim Communications Manager
	Ross Tompkins
City Schools	Bill Mullin
	Todd LoFrese, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services
	Jeff Nash, Community Relations
	Crystal Jones
	Chris Liles
	Darlene Ryan
Other Utilities	Indira Everett, Duke Energy
	Brenda Duke, Duke Energy
	Steve Small, Duke Energy
	Billy Miller, PSNC
	Time Warner Cable
Orange County	Orange 911 Center Supervisor on duty
	Connie Pixley, Environmental Health Supervisor
Other	Bill Ferrell, Meadowmont Community Association
	Chamber of Commerce
	Michael Hughes
	Post Office

**SUMMARY OF ON-SITE HYDROGEN SULFIDE (H₂S)
ODOR MONITORING**

Month and year	Headworks Monitor			UNC Monitor			Digester Monitor			Switchgear Monitor		
	Average H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Minimum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Maximum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Average H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Minimum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Maximum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Average H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Minimum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Maximum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Average H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Minimum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Maximum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)
July 2022	0.0159	0.0000	0.2974 ¹	0.0009	0.0000	0.0147 ²	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 ³	0.0012	0.0000	0.2300 ⁴
August 2022	0.0339	0.0000	0.9841 ⁵	0.0009	0.0000	0.0122 ⁶	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 ⁷	0.0023	0.0000	1.0642 ⁸
September 2022	0.0186	0.0000	0.6960 ⁹	0.0010	0.0000	0.0000 ¹⁰	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 ¹¹	0.0007	0.0000	0.0259 ¹²

Monitor Locations:

Headworks Monitor (#1) – Monitor located at Headworks Facility.

Digester Monitor (#2) – Monitor located between Digester #1 and Digester #4.

UNC Monitor (#3) – Monitor located at Primary Sludge PS.

Switchgear Monitor (#4) – Monitor located at Switchgear Building.

¹ Maximum reading recorded on July 21, 2022

² Maximum reading recorded on July 18, 2022

³ Maximum reading zero all of July 2022

⁴ Maximum reading recorded on July 20, 2022

⁵ Maximum reading recorded on August 19, 2022

⁶ Maximum reading recorded on August 10, 2022

⁷ Maximum reading zero all of August 2022

⁸ Maximum reading recorded on August 15, 2022

⁹ Maximum reading recorded on September 26, 2022

¹⁰ Maximum reading zero all of September 2022

¹¹ Maximum reading zero all of September 2022

¹² Maximum reading recorded on September 16, 2022