



## 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.

January 26, 2023

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 Jamezetta Bedford  
Orange County Board of  
Commissioners  
Post Office Box 8181  
Hillsborough, NC 27278

Dear Mayor Hemminger, Mayor Seils, and Chair Bedford:

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

1. PFAS Monitoring
2. Lead and Copper Rule
3. Annual Water Treatment Change
4. Affordability Program
5. Diversity and Inclusion
6. OWASA Board Updates
7. Cane Creek Reservoir Solar Array
8. Western Intake Partnership
9. AVID Tours
10. Key Infrastructure Investments

### **PFAS Monitoring:**

OWASA is continuing to make progress on the expansion of our ongoing PFAS Monitoring Program after the Environmental Protection Agency (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. The Health Advisory Levels are not regulatory but are the lowest level a health effect can be measured over a lifetime of exposure, particularly among the most vulnerable members of our community.

We expect the EPA to announce new regulations on PFAS in drinking water soon; the initial schedule was for these to be released before the end of calendar year 2022. These regulations will be what OWASA, and other water providers, will be required to meet moving forward. We have expanded our ongoing PFAS monitoring to include University Lake (which was involved in the initial testing several years ago but showed lower levels than Cane Creek



Reservoir), feeder creeks flowing into Cane Creek Reservoir, and the biosolids produced at the Mason Farm Wastewater Treatment Plant.

We have engaged a consultant to assist our work in this area. We are also evaluating our treatment process and modifications that can be made in the short and long term to reduce PFAS levels in our finished drinking water.

We continue to post regular PFAS monitoring results [to our website](#) and are evaluating how to incorporate these new test sites as well as the coming regulations into that results dashboard.

The OWASA Board of Directors received an update on PFAS at a meeting on November 10, 2022. You can see the agenda for that meeting [here](#) and the meeting video [here](#).

### **Lead and Copper Rule:**

OWASA's Team and consultant are continuing work toward meeting regulations of the revised Lead and Copper Rule. The compliance date for the new rule is October 2024. OWASA has always been in full compliance with the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule. Results from our most-recent lead and copper regulatory sampling are available in our Annual Water Quality Report Card covering the 2021 calendar year. The report card is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) on our website.

OWASA has completed an initial lead service line inventory, but we are working to add onto the information that we currently have available from historical records and internal data. We will be publicizing information about this inventory with our community as these efforts progress.

We continue offering free lead and copper testing to customers and are trying to leverage these requests to receive verifiable information from customers on the material that makes up their service line (which connects their home plumbing to the OWASA meter).

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 have no indication there is a threat of lead being present in drinking water across the community.

### **Annual Water Treatment Change:**

In support of our commitment to provide high-quality drinking water, OWASA will temporarily alter its drinking water treatment process beginning at 12 a.m. Wednesday, March 1, 2023, and continuing through the month of March. Water will remain safe to drink during this time, but customers might notice a change in taste or odor of drinking water.

OWASA uses a combination of chlorine and ammonia, known as chloramines, to disinfect drinking water throughout the majority of the year. Each March, however, we only use chlorine for the disinfection process. This change is only for the month of March and has no impact on the safety of the drinking water.

The change in treatment process is recommended by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality and is standard practice among water providers, including neighboring utilities.

We will be sharing this information widely with customers ahead of the change.

### **Affordability Program:**

Affordability and service equity is a key focus area for OWASA. In our Strategic Plan approved by the OWASA Board of Directors in the fall of 2022, we identified increasing the adequacy and accessibility of our customer assistance funding through the Care to Share program.

We have submitted two funding applications to the state's Division of Water Infrastructure to identify, extend, and connect water and sewer services to low-income households within our service area. This effort was also made a priority in our recently adopted Strategic Plan.

Last summer, the OWASA Board voted to eliminate the \$45 account delinquency fee that was previously charged to customers when their service was disconnected for non-payment.

Town Councils in Carrboro and Chapel Hill have voted to dedicate a portion of ARPA funding to cover past-due debts of municipal residents on their OWASA bills that were accrued while the Orange County State of Emergency was in place for the COVID-19 pandemic. We are grateful for this funding.

The OWASA Board is scheduled to receive an update of our Affordability Program in February.

### **Diversity and Inclusion:**

Promoting diversity and inclusion is a top priority for OWASA, which has had an active Diversity and Inclusion Program since 2016. Diversity and Inclusion was also identified as an OWASA value in the Strategic Plan adopted in the fall of 2022.

We anticipate recruitment to begin in early 2023 for a Diversity and Inclusion Specialist. This will be the first position at OWASA focused solely on Diversity and Inclusion.

Internal diversity working groups are continuing their evaluation of OWASA's Diversity and Inclusion Program and how to continue to grow these efforts in the future.

### **OWASA Board Updates:**

The OWASA Board of Directors is currently one member short of a full Board after Chapel Hill appointee David Gorelick resigned at the end of 2022. Dr. Gorelick recently accepted a Policy Fellowship with the United States State Department and has moved from the area.

In addition to the now-vacant seat, upcoming appointments this spring will be requested by Orange County and Chapel Hill. A letter was sent in January to the local governments with information to assist with recruiting and selecting members to the OWASA Board.

We appreciate your interest and action in appointing Board members as we continue critical work in the months ahead. OWASA embraces diversity and inclusion in everything we do, and we would like to encourage all interested candidates to apply for Board appointments. The only true qualification needed is a genuine commitment to serve the community.

### **Cane Creek Reservoir Solar Array:**

We are excited to announce that our fourth and largest solar array is officially online and producing clean energy.

This solar array was installed thanks in part to funding from the Orange County Community Climate Action Grant Program. We are very grateful for that support.

The latest solar array was installed at Cane Creek Reservoir and will offset over a quarter of the electricity used to pump source water to the Jones Ferry Road Water Treatment Plant to be treated and distributed to the community.

An event was held on January 24 celebrating the installation of the latest solar array in conjunction with public and private partners. At this event, we were also pleased to announce that we have met the energy management goal previously set by the OWASA Board of Directors to reduce our purchased electricity by a total of 35% from the 2010 baseline by the end of calendar year 2022.

### **Western Intake Partnership:**

OWASA and local utilities making up the Western Intake Partnership (WIP), which consists of the City of Durham, the Town of Pittsboro, and Chatham County, hosted an Open House in Chatham County on January 10 to provide an opportunity for the public to learn more and ask questions about the proposed intake and water treatment facility expected to be located on the western side of Jordan Lake.

Roughly 50 people attended the open house and expressed an interest in the regional utilities continuing their collaborative work on this issue.

This partnership is in the early stages, and OWASA will continue providing updates to the community as it progresses.

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.

### **AVID Tours:**

OWASA was grateful to be able to host a series of tours late last fall for seventh-grade students across Chapel Hill – Carrboro City Schools (CHCCS) who are part of the AVID program. AVID is a nationwide program standing for Advancement Via Individual Determination and supports students by preparing them for continuing their education after high school. Many of these students are potentially first-generation college students or have been under-represented in collegiate prep courses in the past.

As part of this program, these students were able to tour the Jones Ferry Road Water Treatment Plant and hear from all facets of OWASA's operations. There was also a career panel with each session to show the potential areas they could focus on and find a productive career they are passionate about.

CHCCS communications personnel followed along for one of the tours and wrote an article for [the district website](#).

### **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 nearing completion of 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. New water line installation has been completed and contractors are finishing tie ins to connect customers to the newly installed line. Repaving and restoration work will take place before the project is completed, which is expected by spring 2023.

A maintenance project will soon begin on the Reclaimed Water System that serves UNC – Chapel Hill and St. Thomas More in Chapel Hill. This project has been coordinated to take place while demand for reclaimed water is lower than other times of the year. The project is expected to be completed by May 2023.

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](mailto:ttaylor@owasa.org) or 919-537-4216), or me.

Sincerely,

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

Bruce Boehm, Chair  
OWASA Board of Directors

Attachments

cc: Mr. Richard White, III, Carrboro Town Manager  
Ms. Bonnie Hammersley, Orange County Manager  
Mr. Chris Blue, Interim 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	0
November	0	0	1	7	2	6	7	1	1	4	0	1	0	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	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

**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

<b>Date call received</b>	<b>Time call received</b>	<b>Location</b>
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	No Reported Odors	N/A
November 2022	No Reported Odors	N/A
December 2022	No Reported Odors	N/A



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

<b>Location</b>	<b>Name</b>
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		
St. Thomas More Church and School Morgan Creek area	Pat Evans Ewan Rodewald and Sharon Hodge Marcella Grendler Kay Goldstein Ann Wilson Louis Fogleman St. Thomas More Church staff		
	Ellen Johnson Aldersgate United Methodist Church Betsy Malpass Hanson Malpass Jeannie Cox Laura King Moore Jeanne Langley AW Carr Marilyn and Don Hartman		
	Ronald McDonald House Family House	Robert Huls Shelly Day Greg Kirkpatrick, Executive Director Janice Ross, Operations Manager	
		Reserve	Matt Hapgood 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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<b>Location</b>	<b>Name</b>
	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 (H<sub>2</sub>S)  
ODOR MONITORING**

Month and year	Headworks Monitor			UNC Monitor			Digester Monitor			Switchgear Monitor		
	Average H <sub>2</sub> S Reading (ppm)	Minimum H <sub>2</sub> S Reading (ppm)	Maximum H <sub>2</sub> S Reading (ppm)	Average H <sub>2</sub> S Reading (ppm)	Minimum H <sub>2</sub> S Reading (ppm)	Maximum H <sub>2</sub> S Reading (ppm)	Average H <sub>2</sub> S Reading (ppm)	Minimum H <sub>2</sub> S Reading (ppm)	Maximum H <sub>2</sub> S Reading (ppm)	Average H <sub>2</sub> S Reading (ppm)	Minimum H <sub>2</sub> S Reading (ppm)	Maximum H <sub>2</sub> S Reading (ppm)
<b>October 2022</b>	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 <sup>1</sup>	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 <sup>2</sup>	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 <sup>3</sup>	0.0006	0.0000	0.0044 <sup>4</sup>
<b>November 2022</b>	0.0071	0.0000	0.1387 <sup>5</sup>	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 <sup>6</sup>	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 <sup>7</sup>	0.0006	0.0000	0.0093 <sup>8</sup>
<b>December 2022</b>	0.0004	0.0000	0.0274 <sup>9</sup>	0.0007	0.0000	0.0024 <sup>10</sup>	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 <sup>11</sup>	0.0006	0.0000	0.0083 <sup>12</sup>

**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

<sup>1</sup> Maximum reading zero all of October 2022

<sup>2</sup> Maximum reading zero all of October 2022

<sup>3</sup> Maximum reading zero all of October 2022

<sup>4</sup> Maximum reading occurred on October 5, 2022

<sup>5</sup> Maximum reading occurred on November 12, 2022

<sup>6</sup> Maximum reading zero all of November 2022

<sup>7</sup> Maximum reading zero all of November 2022

<sup>8</sup> Maximum reading occurred on November 12, 2022

<sup>9</sup> Maximum reading occurred on December 13, 2022

<sup>10</sup> Maximum reading occurred on December 25, 2022

<sup>11</sup> Maximum reading zero all of December 2022

<sup>12</sup> Maximum reading occurred on December 14, 2022