



2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

DHEC OFFICE OF RURAL WATER MARCH 2024

A message from the Office of Rural Water Team

The Office of Rural Water (ORW) was established in 2016 to support small rural drinking water and wastewater systems. ORW provides technical assistance to owners and operators of small water systems and collaborates with local, state, and federal partners to develop sustainable, long-term solutions for aging infrastructures.

Since its beginning, the Office of Rural Water has grown and taken a vital role in establishing partnerships and collaborations with many small rural water systems around the state. The ORW Team looks forward to continuing these efforts alongside our dedicated partners while providing assistance to rural water systems around the state of South Carolina.

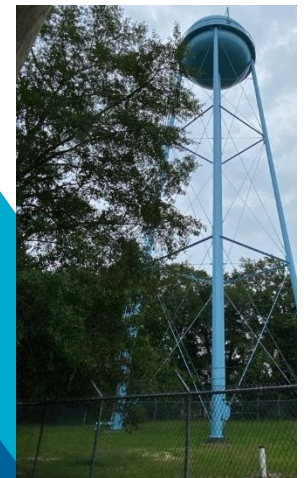


Lookup Forest Wastewater – ORW has worked with the Lookup Forest HOA to facilitate the beginnings of a partnership with a privately owned utility company. This partnership allows for the possibility of expansion and replacement of the wastewater facility in its entirety with a modern approach in the future.

Oak Hill/New Ellenton CPW – The ORW Team has been in collaboration with the Oak Hill Community on a regionalization process with a local municipality. To make this regionalization possible, ORW coordinated with New Ellenton CPW on applying for DHEC’s SRF Principle Forgiveness Funding for an expansion of their storage. If awarded, this will allow for New Ellenton to continue to supply safe, reliable and affordable drinking water to new customers in the expanding area, including the Oak Hill Community.

WIIN (SUDC) – A new grant was sought out by the ORW Team to assist communities in both Berkeley and Calhoun counties establish new drinking water lines. These new lines would bring water to both the Ruby Ridge (Berkeley) and Chimney Swift (Calhoun) communities. ORW Staff continues to work diligently with the communities, municipalities and appropriate county staff to make this opportunity a reality.

Level 2 Assessments – ORW has been assisting the Bureau’s Drinking Water Protection Division with completing Level 2 Assessments (LV2As) throughout the state. These assessments are needed when a small public well has more than one positive total coliform sample within a set period of time. ORW staff completed 10 LV2As in 2023 to assist small water systems to ensure good water quality.





Conferences and Trainings – ORW continues to participate in a number of different conferences and trainings statewide such as the South Carolina Rural Water Association regional conferences and the Council of Governments workshops, as well as cross training with other departments within DHEC. Most recently, ORW staff had the opportunity to attend the SCRWA Decision Maker's Conference and the SC Environmental Conference; both of which acquainted ORW staff with more water and wastewater systems.

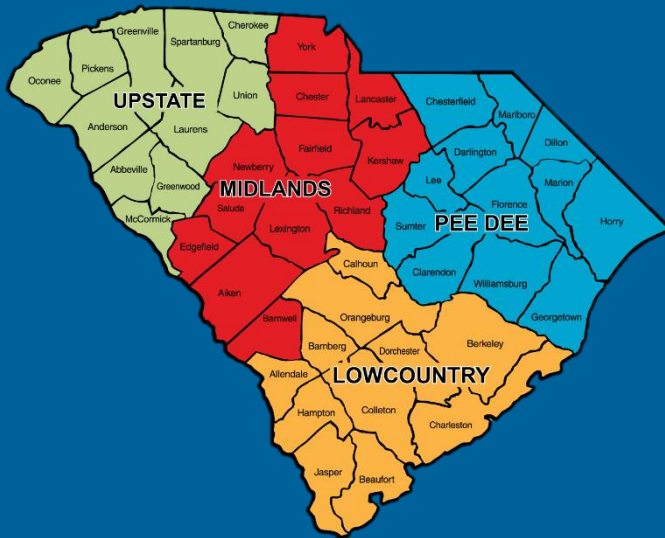
WIIN Lead Testing Grant – ORW continues to manage SC's Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program Drinking Water Grant. The Grant was brought to a pause in July of 2023 to allow ORW staff to revamp the program and seek new federal funding. The latest funding, if awarded, would allow the ORW team to continue the sampling process for public schools and child care facilities, and could allow limited funding for remediation to select facilities in Opportunity Zones. As of the last round of funding, approximately 3,876 samples were taken at 1,938 drinking water taps from 388 different facilities across the state. These facilities include approximately 275 child care centers, 72 elementary schools and 41 secondary schools.



2024 New & On-Going Initiatives

- **Facilitate** innovative collaborations and partnerships to support rural water systems.
- **Promote** sustainability of rural water and wastewater systems.
- **Continue** on-going efforts to provide technical assistance to challenged rural water systems, including underserved minority communities.
- **Develop** easily accessible resources for rural water systems on the ORW web page (scdhec.gov/ORW)
- **Project management** of the WIIN Grant
- **Continue** to develop the ORW to further assist rural water systems and their ever-growing challenges.

ORW Coverage Area and Staff Map



Meet Your ORW Team!

Manager: Brad Martin – (803) 898-4240
Upstate: Fred Taylor - (803) 898-4241
Midlands: Caleb Snelling – (803) 898-4432
Pee Dee: Vacant – (803) 898-3391
Lowcountry: Brett Butz - (803) 898-4431



On July 1, 2024, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) becomes two separate agencies – the South Carolina Departments of Environmental Services (SCDES) and Public Health (DPH). Additionally, DHEC’s retail food program and milk and dairy lab will merge with the South Carolina Department of Agriculture. See our [DHEC Restructuring page](#) to learn more.

To protect and preserve State water resources for drinking, swimming, fishing and other uses to benefit present and future South Carolinians.