



2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

SCDES OFFICE OF RURAL WATER DECEMBER 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 aiding rural water systems around the state of South Carolina.



DWINSAs – ORW was approached by the Department's State Revolving Fund Division (SRF) to assist in collecting data for EPA's 8th Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment (DWINSAs). DWINSAs serves as a nation-wide assessment of long-term municipality needs, and directly impacts future Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) funding for states. Data collection will begin Fall of 2024 and is expected to end October 2025.

Allendale/Fairfax – The ORW Team has established fresh connections between the Town of Allendale and the Town of Fairfax to begin an overhaul on the systems' wastewater treatment process. A major concern in this area has been excessive inflow and infiltration (I&I) causing potentially hazardous effects such as sanitary sewer overflows after rain events. Because I&I can be difficult to pinpoint, ORW staff has remained hard at work with the Town's and other local, state and federal organizations to assist the system in its continued efforts to provide safe wastewater services.

WIIN (SUDC) – ORW continues to advance the implementation of the WIIN SUDC grant program. This innovative funding initiative provided by the EPA, in collaboration with funding support to Calhoun County from the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority, aims to deliver sustainable and consistent municipal water service to residents in Cameron and Goose Creek. By extending municipal water lines and connecting individual homeowners currently relying on failing private wells, the program ensures access to reliable water at no cost to the homeowners. In partnership with Orangeburg DPU and Charleston Water System, ORW anticipates completing these critical connections to municipal sources by the end of Q2 2025.

Level 2 Assessments – ORW continues to assist 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 17 LV2As in 2024 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 DES. 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.

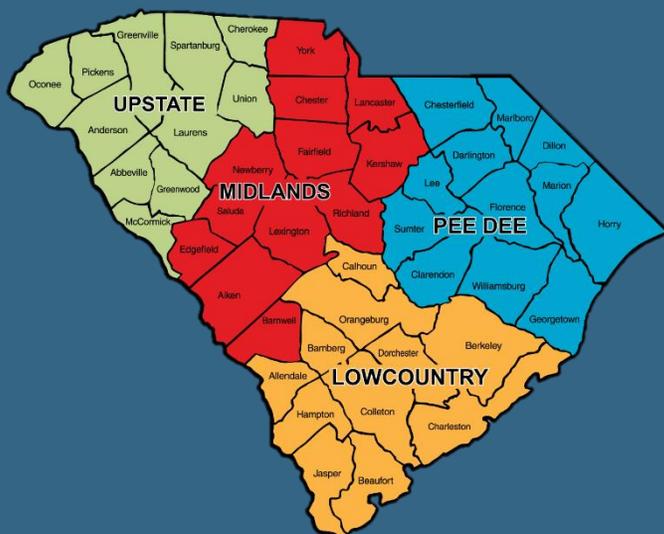
WIIN Lead Testing Grant – ORW continues to manage SC's Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program Drinking Water Grant. The Grant was brought to a pause in July of 2023 to allow ORW staff to revamp the program and for the Department's transition to settle. Current funding supports continued sampling for eligible facilities and allows for remediation efforts 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. As of August 2024, Rogers and Callcott has agreed to fulfill the program solicitation posted by the Grant Staff. Through the use of WIIN Grant funds, it is the Department's ultimate goal to assist all public schools and child care facilities within the state to provide safe, contaminant free drinking water to students.



2024 New & On-Going Initiatives

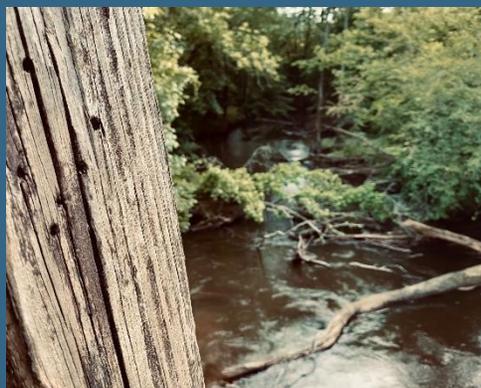
- **Facilitate** innovative collaborations and partnerships to support rural water systems.
- **Promote** sustainability of rural water and wastewater systems.
- **Continue** on-going efforts to provide technical assistance to challenged rural water systems, including underserved minority communities.
- **Develop** easily accessible resources for rural water systems on the ORW web page (des.sc.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!

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*On July 1, 2024, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) became 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.

Science. Service. Sustainability.