

# Office of Rural Water



*The Office of Rural Water (ORW) was established in 2016 to support small rural water 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.*

## 2021 Year in Review



**Town of Clio** – ORW collaborated with the Town of Clio, SERCAP, and other stakeholders to address compliance and sanitary sewer I/I and Sanitary Sewer Overflow issues. Funding is being sought for a sprayfield rehab project and a Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Study. Recently, ORW was successful in partnering with Resource Environmental Solutions to begin discussions on the Town’s goal of eliminating the point source discharge of the Town’s WWTP to Hagins Prong Creek.

**Lower Eastern Cherokee Nation**– ORW has been collaborating with the SC Commission for Minority Affairs, SERCAP, and Laurens County Water and Sewer Commission to provide public drinking water to the tribal and surrounding community. Grant awards to the appropriate eligible public entity are still being sought to provide drinking water infrastructure to this community.



**Goat Island WWTP** – ORW has successfully formed a working group consisting of representatives of the Town of Summerton, Clarendon County, SERCAP, and local state legislative leaders to tie the Goat Island WWTP to the Town of Summerton system. This would eliminate a WWTP near the shores of Lake Marion, a major recreational and fishing lake in South Carolina. This project continues to be developed as a funding package is being prepared.

## SC Rural Infrastructure Sustainability Advisory

**Committee** – ORW participated as a member of the SCRIA Sustainability Advisory Committee. SCRIA is hosting a [Sustainability Forum](#) in September 2021. The forum will focus on the viability (sustainability) of public utility systems in SC. SCRIA hired a contractor to do an in-depth look at this important and challenging issue in our state. The findings of their study will be presented at the forum followed by panel discussions with a wide variety of informed stakeholders. The outcome of the study and forum will be to provide tools for assessing the viability of utility systems and to explore possible solutions for non-viable utilities such as partnerships, regionalization, etc.



**City of Liberty** – ORW was instrumental in providing technical assistance and input for the City of Liberty to secure funding to address compliance issues with its wastewater collection system. Funding was obtained from the SC Rural Infrastructure Authority and the Community Development Block Grant program of the SC Department of Commerce to rehab/replace all four (4) existing pump stations. Additional funding efforts continue with USDA – RD for sewer system upgrades.

**WIIN Lead Testing Grant** – ORW is managing SC's [Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program Drinking Water Grant](#), which is a voluntary program to assist with testing for lead in drinking water at schools and child care programs in the state's [opportunity zones](#). This includes the prioritization of facilities serving younger children (Pre-K, K-5), underserved and low-income communities, and facilities that are older and more likely to contain lead plumbing. While the pandemic has slowed sampling efforts, ORW continues to work with partners such as the Department of Social Services and Clemson University for education and outreach purposes.



## 2022 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 ([www.scdhec.gov/office-rural-water](http://www.scdhec.gov/office-rural-water)).
- **Project management** of the *Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program Drinking Water* grant.
- **Continue** to develop the ORW to be better equipped to assist rural water systems with their ever-growing challenges.
- **New positions within ORW** – state funding has been secured for the addition of two new members of the ORW team.