

THE FLOW

CUSTOMER NEWSLETTER

March 2026 Edition 228 Georgetown Road, Jacksonville, NC 28540 (910) 455-0722 www.onwasa.com



FROM THE DESK OF

FRANKY HOWARD, CEO

Protect & Preserve!

FIX A LEAK WEEK

March 16, 2026 - March 22, 2026

March 2026 marks four years since I began serving as CEO for this great Water and Sewer Authority in Onslow County. I honestly can't believe how fast the time has flown by since my first day on the job. I was fortunate to walk into what was already a "well-oiled machine" thanks to strong prior leadership. I hope it is evident by our recent progress in many areas and the steady advancement of our Strategic Plan goals that this positive momentum continues under my leadership and that of our talented and dedicated leadership team. ONWASA is blessed and fortunate to have a great team of employees that work diligently to ensure our customers and consumers receive safe, reliable drinking water and dependable wastewater services.

March 8-14 is National Groundwater Awareness Week. This is especially meaningful to ONWASA because all our drinking water is currently sourced through groundwater supply wells. Unlike many public water systems that rely on surface water sources such as rivers or reservoirs, ONWASA is extremely fortunate that our primary water source is deep water aquifers.

We currently operate 35 active wells throughout Onslow County, primarily drawing from the Castle Hayne and Black Creek aquifers, which are over 200 feet deep. There are more than 70 public water supply wells across the county, making groundwater protection a shared responsibility.

You may be wondering how you can help during groundwater awareness week; that's a great question. Even though these aquifers are deep and protected, we must all do our part to keep them clean and sustainable for generations to come. This is why it is important to properly dispose of chemicals to ensure they do not make their way into the aquifers and from a planning standpoint we should manage as best as possible the use of land around these important public water supply wells. Our goal is to locate any new wells in areas that are best suited for providing superior quality raw water for many years.

There have been some recent concerns shared in the Holly Ridge area related to our current raw water supply wells and their proximity to the known PFAS contamination site referred to as Site 111 on Base. We want to assure our customers and the community that we have been in ongoing communication with the Base's environmental team and their contractors as they continue to test, evaluate, and better understand the conditions at the site. In fact, our Board Chairman, Mr. Royce Bennett, and I attended the most recent Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting in January. The RAB provides updates on environmental investigation and remediation efforts taking place on the Base. Meeting minutes and related materials are publicly available online by visiting <https://www.lejeune.marines.mil/Offices-Staff/Environmental-Mgmt/Restoration-Advisory-Board/>. A full report for Site 111 is expected to be released soon. As reflected in the minutes of the January RAB meeting, the known PFAS impacts associated with Site 111 is within the soil and the surficial (shallow) aquifer and not the deeper Lower and Upper Castle Hayne aquifers that supply our production wells.

A clay confining layer separates these aquifers and restricts movement between them. We continue to monitor our wells, and the Base is monitoring additional sampling wells between our production wells and their site to ensure there is no movement. The surficial aquifer in fact flows away from our well sites. With this information and the guidance of our contracted hydrologist, we have continue to use our wells at around 75% of the pumping capacity, and we alternate their schedules. I am mentioning this information to assure you our customers that we are taking this situation seriously, in fact when we first learned about this back in 2021, we immediately took these wells offline until we had additional information and sampling done.

March 16-22 is Fix a Leak Week. Each year we ask our customers to take the time to address any leaks they may have on their side of the meter and within their home or business. Every drop of drinking water that we produce and deliver to our customers is a precious resource that we need to conserve and protect. By addressing these leaks, we can ensure that all our water that is being delivered is used and consumed rather than being wasted through an unaddressed leak. ONWASA addresses leaks within our distribution system all year long and we have taken many new steps and utilized new technology to find leaks and fix them as soon as we can. This past year we even employed a leak detecting K-9 named Delta, who is also up for hire to individual users if you have a pesky leak that you can't seem to locate. She senses the chlorine in the water and tells her handler when she finds it.

That is all I have for you all this month. I hope everyone has a blessed and productive March! Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns and how we can better serve you as our customers and consumers.

Fresh Spring Lemonade

Ingredients

- 1 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 4-6 lemons)
- ¾ to 1 cup sugar (adjust to taste)
- 5 cups cold ONWASA tap water
- Ice
- Lemon slices & fresh mint (optional)

Directions

Step 1

In a small saucepan, combine 1 cup of water and sugar. Heat gently, stirring until sugar dissolves (this creates a simple syrup). Let cool.

Step 2

In a pitcher, combine lemon juice and the cooled syrup.

Step 3

Add the remaining 4 cups of cold water and stir well.

Step 4

Serve over ice and garnish with lemon slices or mint.

SOURCE: allrecipes.com

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