



## OWASA, UNIVERSITY SIGN RECLAIMED WATER CONTRACT

OWASA and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have signed a contract for the funding, development and operation of a reclaimed water system.

The OWASA Board of Directors approved the contract on March 23rd after publicizing the proposal and receiving public comments that night. OWASA and UNC representatives completed the formal signing of the contract on Monday, April 10th.

The reclaimed water system will enable the use of highly treated wastewater from the Mason Farm Wastewater Treatment Plant for non-drinking purposes allowed under State rules.

Operation of the reclaimed water system



*In planning ahead for the reclaimed water system, the University has already begun to install reclaimed water pipes as part of construction on the main campus.*

is projected to begin by the end of 2008. The system will initially serve chiller plants on the southern campus. Drinking water is now used in cooling towers at the chiller plants.

Initially, reclaimed water use will lower the University's drinking water demand by about 530,000 gallons per day, which equals about 6% of overall water demand by the Carrboro-Chapel Hill community.

*(continued on page 2)*

## RECLAIMED WATER USE TO INCREASE WATER SUPPLY, LOWER FUTURE WATER SYSTEM COSTS

*(continued from page 1)*

In the long term, we expect that reclaimed water use on campus will reduce the community's water demand by 13% or more.

### WHO WILL PAY FOR THE RECLAIMED WATER SYSTEM?

The University and other future reclaimed water system customers will pay all capital, operating and administrative costs of the reuse system, except those covered by grants. To date, OWASA has received approval of about \$2.5 million in Federal and State grants.

In addition, customers who choose to have reclaimed water service will pay for the future costs of extending the system (where an extension is practical).

### WHY IS RECLAIMED WATER USE IMPORTANT?

The use of reclaimed water will reduce drinking water demand. Reclaimed water use is therefore a form of water conservation.

In effect, reclaimed water use is also a way to increase the water supply for the overall community. Reclaimed water use will reduce the community's risk of running out of water during droughts and other water supply emergencies.

Without reclaimed water use and conservation, it would likely become necessary to obtain an additional water source, such as Jordan Lake, to meet our community's future water needs.

Expansion of our Jones Ferry Road Water Treatment Plant would also be necessary without reclaimed water use.

The costs for such projects would be substantial.

Reclaimed water use will help maintain the sufficiency of our community's high quality, locally-protected water sources: the Cane Creek Reservoir, University Lake and the future Expanded Stone Quarry Reservoir west of Carrboro.

### IS RECLAIMED WATER USE SAFE?

Yes. The State of North Carolina and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have concluded that with proper management, reclaimed water use is safe and environmentally sound.

Our reclaimed water will be highly treated wastewater that has gone through the advanced treatment processes at the Mason Farm Wastewater Treatment Plant including filtration and disinfection with ultraviolet light and chlorine. An effective level of chlorine will remain in reclaimed water after treatment at the Mason Farm plant to help prevent growth of bacteria in the reclaimed water distribution system.

Dr. Mark Sobsey of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a nationally recognized expert in environmental microbiology, did a study in 2004 which concluded that:

*"...pathogens will be reduced to negligible levels in OWASA reclaimed water and there will be no realistic opportunity for human exposure to pathogens from the beneficial uses of the reclaimed wastewater."*

Reclaimed water can be used only for non-drinking purposes such as cooling water for chiller systems and power plants, and for irrigation, toilet flushing,

street cleaning, construction, dust control, etc. in accord with State rules.

The reclaimed water system will be separate from the drinking water system. The color of reclaimed water pipes, valves, and meters will differ from those in the drinking water system. Reclaimed water pipes, valves and meters will also be marked and labeled, as State law requires.

Where reclaimed water is used, signs will be posted advising employees and other citizens not to drink reclaimed water.

### WILL RECLAIMED WATER USE AFFECT DRINKING WATER BILLS?

Like any form of water conservation, reclaimed water use will reduce drinking water revenues. Drinking water rates will likely be increased somewhat to offset the reduction in revenues.

However, the more significant long-term financial effect of reclaimed water use will be reducing and/or deferring costs of expanding our water supply, treatment and storage capacities.

This will help keep water rates lower than they would otherwise be in the future.

## A shut-off valve saves water, money and time

Do you know where to find the emergency water shut-off valve for your home or business? A major water leak in your plumbing system can cause significant property damage in addition to water loss and inconvenience.



Plumbing codes require buildings constructed or renovated in recent decades to have shut-off valves, but their location is not always known. In many cases, the shut-off valve is in the crawl space or basement, or in

a closet of the home or other building.

If you do not have a shut-off valve,

please consider having a licensed plumber install one.

If you already have a shut-off valve, please make sure you know where it is, and tag or mark it so other people can find it easily.

OWASA gives away free tags for marking shut-off valves. Please visit or call our office in Carrboro, or send an e-mail to [webmaster@owasa.org](mailto:webmaster@owasa.org) to get a tag.

*Este boletín informativo contiene información sobre los servicios de agua y alcantarillado de OWASA. Para obtener una traducción, por favor llame al 537-4221, mande un correo electrónico a [webmaster@owasa.org](mailto:webmaster@owasa.org), o visite la página de Internet [www.owasa.org](http://www.owasa.org). ¡Muchas gracias!*

Water conservation and reclaimed water use: part of our community's **SUSTAINABLE** quality of life!

