



Water Works

June 2022



Comment on Cape Fear River protection plan

Members of the public are invited to give their comments on CFPUA's [draft Source Water Protection Plan](#) by Friday, June 24.

CFPUA's draft Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) outlines

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strategies to protect the lower Cape Fear River from pollution sources. The Cape Fear River is our region's primary drinking water source, with 80% of CFPUA customers receiving treated water from the river.

The draft SWPP was written with the input of partners from throughout Southeastern North Carolina, outlining specific strategies and goals to mitigate pollution. If approved by the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality, it will be the first such plan for a portion of the Cape Fear River.

[The draft SWPP is available at this link.](#)

[Public comments can be submitted through this form.](#)

[Sweeney Treatment Enhancements Project](#)



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State, Federal water leaders tour CFPUA's new Sweeney filter facility



Radhika Fox, Assistant Administrator for the U.S. EPA's Office of Water, (left) and N.C. Department of Environmental Quality Secretary Elizabeth Biser (center) speak with CFPUA Deputy Executive Director Carel Vandermeijden at the Sweeney Water Treatment Plant.

On June 15, Radhika Fox, Assistant Administrator for the U.S. EPA's Office of Water, toured the new Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) filter facility under construction at CFPUA's Sweeney Water Treatment Plant.

Assistant Administrator Fox was joined by EPA staff, as well as N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Secretary Elizabeth Biser, DEQ staff, and staff of the North Carolina Collaboratory.

The Sweeney Plant sources raw water from the Cape Fear River and provides drinking water to approximately 80% of CFPUA's customers. Eight new deep-bed GAC filters to remove PFAS from treated drinking water are expected to come online this summer, providing effective treatment for PFAS and reducing GenX to at or near non-detectable levels. CFPUA is building the deep-bed GAC filters in response to PFAS contamination in the Cape Fear River, traced to decades of discharges from a chemical manufacturing plant operated by Chemours and its predecessor, DuPont.

"We are deeply grateful for Assistant Administrator Fox, Secretary Biser, and their staffs for taking the time to visit Wilmington and see the work CFPUA is

doing to protect our customers' drinking water," CFPUA Executive Director Kenneth Waldroup said. "Even before the discovery of PFAS in the Cape Fear River, the Sweeney Plant was one of the most advanced water treatment plants in North Carolina. When this project is completed this summer, Sweeney will be among the most effective in the entire region at removing PFAS."

[Read more about EPA and DEQ's visit here.](#)

New raw water line already benefiting CFPUA customers, one month after ribbon cutting

CFPUA's 200,000 customers are already enjoying the benefits of our region's new raw water main.

Last month, local leaders cut the ribbon on the new King's Bluff Raw Water Transmission main in Bladen County. ([You can read more about that event in May's Water Works newsletter.](#)) This regional project was completed ahead of schedule and under budget and ready to serve the region just in time for summer. The new 54-inch-diameter main moves raw water from the Cape Fear River to our region, supplying water to utilities in Brunswick, New Hanover, and Pender counties. For CFPUA alone, the new line increased our raw water capacity by 15 million gallons per day (MGD).

With temperatures rising and tourism season heating up, water usage across CFPUA's service area is steadily increasing. As of June 19, cumulative water usage by CFPUA customers was 0.78% higher than at the same time last year: just under 3.5 billion gallons delivered so far in 2022.

In past years, that rising demand coupled with our region's ongoing drought would have pushed CFPUA to issue a water conservation advisory for customers. [Our neighbors in Brunswick County did so just last week.](#) However, with the new 54-inch raw water main that supplies Sweeney, the expansion of the Richardson Water Treatment Plant to 7 MGD, and additional well capacity in Monterey Heights, CFPUA has been maintaining ample supply to keep up with demand.

Still, we're keeping an eye on weather conditions in our region, which as of last week was [classified as being under moderate drought](#). We encourage all

CFPUA customers to get into water-saving habits by following the easy tips at [CFPUA.org/Conserve](https://www.cfpua.org/Conserve). Being mindful of water use will continue to ensure enough supply remains year-round for everyone in our community.



Have PFAS questions? Check out our online guide

Earlier this month, the EPA issued lifetime Health Advisory Levels for four PFAS compounds: GenX, PFAS, PFOA, and PFBS. These advisories are not enforceable standards for drinking water but were issued to provide information to water providers and the public.

CFPUA understands that customers may have questions about what this means for their drinking water. To help answer those questions, staff have compiled a helpful glossary of EPA terms related to drinking water standards and advisories. You can also find the latest results from CFPUA's regular PFAS testing and information on new filters coming this year to our Sweeney Plant.

To learn more about EPA's PFAS advisories, [visit CFPUA.org/WaterTerms](https://www.cfpua.org/WaterTerms).

Closed for 4th of July

CFPUA will be closed for business on Independence Day, Monday, July 4. Customers can still manage their CFPUA accounts online or through the Interactive Voice-Response system.



910-332-6550



CFPUA.org



**Report Emergencies:
910-332-6565**



Employee Spotlight

Each month we introduce you to one of the more than 300 employees at CFPUA who work to provide you with the best water and wastewater services.



Tomo Martinez

Laboratory Technician

Name: *Tomo Martinez*

Birthplace: *Mission Viejo, California*

Department/Division: *Environmental Management and Sustainability*

Position: *Laboratory Technician*

Length of employment: *5 years, 10 months*

Briefly describe your typical day at work: *I'll usually start the day off calibrating any*

instruments that I'll be using throughout the day. During the days when I'm doing water sampling, I'll drive from site to site following a set list and collect any drinking water parameters and samples needed for that day. Then, once my set lists have been completed, I'll travel back to the lab and process the samples that have been collected. Wastewater sampling follows a similar process, but involves traveling to all the plants in the county. During the days I'm scheduled in the lab, I'll be processing all the samples collected throughout the week, making sure everything is reported before the sample hold times expire.

What do you enjoy most about your job? *Working at the lab really keeps me busy. There is a good balance of working in the lab and working outdoors.*

Tell us about one of your biggest accomplishments or challenges while working at CFPUA? *Gaining the knowledge of how the wastewater and drinking water plants operate in order to serve New Hanover County. It's such a large operation and knowing the ins and outs of it takes time and experience. So far I have received my Waste Water I Analyst and Micro-Bio Certification, and I hope to receive more certifications in the future.*

What advice would you give to recent new hires? *Attention to detail is key. Ask questions and be curious.*

What's one thing you'd want customers to know about your department, position, or CFPUA in general? *I believe that we're all part of a tight knit community. We all work together as a collective to supply the county with safe drinking water and help protect our environment. I encourage all customers to contact CFPUA with any questions, concerns, or just come say "Hi."*

What do you like to do when you're not at work? *I like to travel -- I believe that there is so much to experience in the world and it's important to get out every chance you get. If I'm not traveling, I'm usually spending time with friends and family. One of my goals this summer is to get into fishing and see what the coastal waters have to offer in Wilmington.*

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