



TOWN OF RIVER BEND

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www.riverbendnc.org

PUBLIC NOTICE

Date: February 17, 2026

Since our last Public Notice, which was issued on October 7, 2025, we have made some advances in our treatment process. Since that notice, we have implemented a rotating treatment schedule for our 3 wells. The treatment process produced good results in all 3 wells. During the months of November-January, we achieved results that were below the target level for manganese. In fact, the average for that 3-month period was .03mg/l with a target of .05mg/l. However, that treatment process is very labor intensive. Our staff, with the aid of an engineer, has designed and constructed an automated process to achieve the same treatment level.

Based on those results, we petitioned the Public Water Supply Regional Office for permission to initiate a pilot study on 1 of our 3 wells using that automated process. They approved the study, and it began on January 13. After an initial 2 weeks of calibrating the system, that study has proven successful. Since January 27, the average level for manganese was .03mg/l with the same target level of .05 mg/l. Staff from the regional office visited our site to inspect the pilot study process. We are still in the fine-tuning, monitoring and data collection process for that study and hope to reduce the manganese levels even further. We will likely conduct the study for another 6-8 weeks. That should give us and the state ample data to assess its efficacy and reliability. Once we have fine-tuned the system and have consistently good results, we will seek a permit to implement that automated process system-wide. During the pilot study, no water from that treatment unit is being distributed to customers. We are using the other 2 treatment units to supply customers.

Over the past few months, we have increased our flushing frequency for dead-end streets, and we also do more non-scheduled flushing if/when any “hot spots” arise that need additional attention. On January 20, the Council held a Q&A to discuss water quality issues with the public. Around 15 citizens attended the meeting and it went well. We will continue to work on improving our water quality. We will also work to maintain good water quality through the rotating treatment process and hopefully through the new treatment process, if the pilot study process is approved by the state. These will be considered short-term solutions while we continue to pursue a long-term solution. The **PLAN** for a long-term solution is the construction of a new water treatment plant and 2 new wells that will draw raw water from a higher quality (aka deeper) aquifer. That project is estimated to cost \$21,000,000 and has a long way to go. Because it has many variables that are outside of the control of the town, such as environmental review, permitting and engineering review, and bidding, it is not yet guaranteed and thus remains a plan. Due to an abundance of recent state-wide grants, many towns are constructing new projects. That has created a huge backlog of projects that must be reviewed and approved by the state before construction begins. The target date for completion is July 19, 2029. If the plan is approved for construction, we will try to complete it sooner.

Unless there are substantive changes to our short-term or long-term plans, this will be the last public notice on this issue.



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PUBLIC NOTICE

Date: October 7, 2025

For some time, the Town of River Bend has experienced sporadic instances of discolored water. That is attributed to the high levels of naturally occurring iron and manganese in the ground water that we pump from the Castle Hayne Aquifer. We have a treatment system in place to remove manganese and iron from the ground water before it is distributed to our customers for use. Our system works much like water treatment systems that some individuals have in their homes. Our system is licensed, monitored and inspected by the State of North Carolina's Public Water Supply (PWS) Section and is operated by licensed personnel. Our system is just larger than a home-sized unit and our filter material is a product called Birm. It is specifically designed to remove iron and manganese.

Several months ago, we spent nearly \$60,000 to replace all of the Birm in our treatment system. Shortly after doing so, we noticed reduced concentrations of both iron and manganese in our distribution system. That is the result that we expected.

Then, in June we noticed a slow increase in the levels of manganese. The other components of our water have remained consistent and at the expected levels. We tweaked our treatment process and increased our backwashing of the Birm in an effort to correct the issue. That did not work. The increased levels of manganese persisted. We believe the Birm media became fouled. We are not sure how that happened. In July and August we treated our new Birm, as directed by the manufacturer. That worked great. The manganese levels dropped dramatically at all 3 wells.

Now, fast forward to September and we are again experiencing an incremental increase to our manganese levels at all 3 wells. Again, we do not know what is causing the increase. To date, this is not a system-wide issue. Some of you may not have noticed any issues. We want you to know that while your water may be discolored, it is not a health hazard. According to the PWS, "Manganese is part of the National Secondary Drinking Water Regulations that may cause cosmetic effects (black to brown color, black staining, bitter metallic taste) in drinking water but is not considered a health threat."

Please be aware that our staff is working with multiple resources, including the State of North Carolina, engineers, testing labs, our Birm supplier, and water industry experts to try and resolve this cosmetic problem as soon as possible. We do not want any of our customers to ever experience discolored water and we apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you. The Mayor and Council members are also water customers. Town Hall and all town facilities are also connected to the same water system. We are all in this together. If you do experience discolored water, we recommend that you flush your water for a while. Typically, it clears up after a few minutes of flushing. We will keep you informed of our efforts and progress.