

# DeBerry Water Supply Corporation – Full System Update

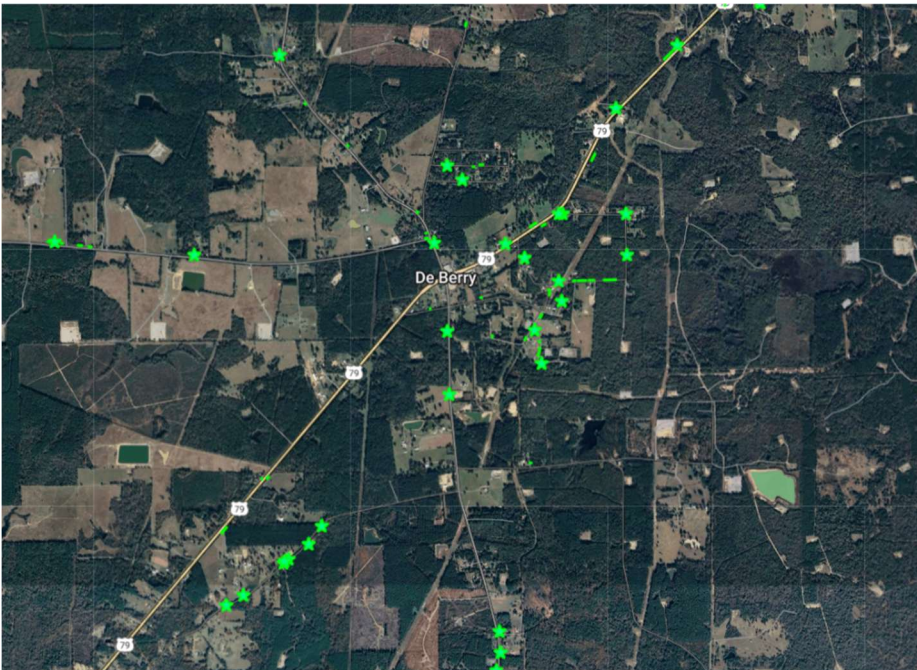
From Board President, Sara Edwards

Members,

I want to begin by saying that I personally write every water update for DeBerry Water Supply Corporation. Several board members have been asking me for weeks to prepare another update, and although I intended to, I simply had not sat down to write it. Between working full-time, raising my family, and the increasing demands of managing the water system during these issues, I fell behind on communicating.

This weekend, DeBerry WSC received a complaint referencing the recent rate increases and the frustration of not seeing visible improvements. I understand that the lack of communication on my part contributed to this, and I want to acknowledge that openly. I owe this community consistent updates, and I am committed to improving that going forward.

I also want to clarify that the majority of costs incurred this year have gone directly to well rehabilitation and emergency repairs — not administrative overhead. Every repair is documented with photographs, and I personally upload them into our system mapping software. Our engineers access this mapping to update the master plan, confirm line conditions, and prioritize projects, while also ensuring we maintain full documentation for auditors and any state or federal agency that reviews our records.



Each green area represents a repair and has a corresponding picture attached within our system new mapping program.

With that said, here is where the system stands today, what we learned this week, and what we are doing to move forward.

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# 1. How We Got Here: The Need for New Wells

As most of you know, DeBerry Water Supply Corporation is in **urgent need of new wells**. Last year, we took the first major step by submitting **nine different applications** for grants through the State of Texas. More than 300 water systems applied, and only 33 were awarded funding. Because of missing documentation, outdated records, and the condition we inherited, we simply did not score high enough.

Since then, your board has worked nonstop to rebuild records, correct past deficiencies, and improve our standing. This included completing **multiple years of Water Loss Audits and Water Loss Surveys**, which are required by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) and had not been completed or submitted in prior years. These missing reports significantly lowered our scores on earlier applications.

We corrected that.

All required Water Loss Audits and Water Loss Surveys going back **multiple years** have now been completed and submitted, clearing long-standing deficiencies and placing our system in a much stronger position for future funding cycles.

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## DeBerry WSC

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**Zhang, Qiwen** <qiwenzhang@plummer.com>

Tue, Apr 1, 2025 at 10:36 AM

To: "deberrywsc@gmail.com" <deberrywsc@gmail.com>

Cc: "Buff, Brigit" <bbuff@plummer.com>, "regioniwater@gmail.com" <regioniwater@gmail.com>, John Martin <jmartin@setgcd.org>

Good morning, Sara,

Thank you for sending over the 2023 WLA. We appreciate you taking the time to provide this important document.

I wanted to let you know that we will be incorporating the 2023 WLA into the appendix to Chapter 1 of the Regional Water Plan. Your efforts to improve the DeBerry WSC and address the community's needs are commendable, and we are glad to assist in any way we can.

If you have any further questions or additional information to share, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Best regards,  
Qiwen Zhang

**Qiwen Zhang, PE**

*Project Manager*

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With that plan completed, we submitted a **\$1,000,000 USDA Emergency Grant** in September 2025 for **three test wells and two new production wells**. Unfortunately, just as approval was beginning, the federal fiscal year ended and the government shutdown delayed everything, forcing portions of the process to restart.

The Rural Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan (Infrastructure) and Rural Broadband (Farm Bill) Programs' online application process will be migrated from RD Apply to Salesforce and will utilize the online application intake system currently used by ReConnect applicants. Migration will take place starting in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2024. Applicants who intend to submit an application prior to September 30, 2023, are encouraged to do so via RD Apply at your earliest convenience. Applicants who do not intend to submit an application for consideration in a timely manner, are encouraged to submit any future Infrastructure or Farm Bill applications on the new platform once it becomes available. Please reach out to your local [General Field Representative](#) or submit a question via [Contact Us](#) if you have any questions about this upcoming change.

[Export to Excel](#)

Unfortunately, something inside that well changed, and this triggered the series of water quality problems many of you have been experiencing over the past several months.

### 3. What We Learned Today. Monday 1.19.2026

We brought in professional consultants, system operators, engineers, and our chemical provider. Over 50 water samples were collected from wells, tanks, distribution lines, and several members' homes.



The first of over 50 samples taken the past few months

This morning at 9 AM, I personally received a critical call from our chemical provider, Hawkins. They confirmed that:

Two of our wells — including our strongest producer — are releasing naturally occurring iron-related bacteria.

This bacteria:

- Is not harmful to health,
- But forms dark discoloration,
- Creates heavy buildup in tanks and lines,
- Overwhelms household filters, and
- Reacts intensely when chlorine is added.

Based on all findings, the consensus from multiple professionals was clear:

The strongest well had to be pulled immediately and evaluated internally.

That well was pulled today.

Tomorrow:

- A camera will be lowered into the well
- Integrity and internal failures will be assessed
- The plan is to acid wash and rebalance Well 3
- Once this is complete, the second affected well will be shut off and only used for emergencies

We cannot fully flush the system or correct discoloration until the root of the problem — the failing well — is addressed.

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## 4. Why We Couldn't Simply Shut Down the Problem Well

Under normal circumstances, a system would immediately remove a problematic well from service.

We could not do that.

Without this well, the system would have faced:

- Pressure failures
- Extended boil water notices
- Inability to meet daily usage
- Complete system outages

With only two other functioning wells, shutting the strongest one down earlier would have placed the entire system in jeopardy.

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## 5. The Good News: We Are Close to Major Funding

There is positive news.

Last week, the **USDA granted us approval to begin certain portions of the project early**, even before final funding is released. This is extremely rare and demonstrates the seriousness of our situation.

We have already:

- Re-engaged landowners for test well sites
- **Signed a contract** on one location
- Begun preparing required legal notices for bids
- Coordinated with engineering and environmental teams

I am in **weekly contact** with the USDA Henderson office to push the process forward as quickly as possible.

We also have contingency plans in case funding is delayed, including scaling the project to avoid passing costs to members.

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## 6. Advocacy on Your Behalf

Beyond operational work:

- I contacted multiple state senators and representatives last week

*Hi Sara, Thank you for calling this afternoon! As we discussed, please feel free to send the PIFs and the Ardurra engineer's report. Greatly appreciate your time. With thanks, Paige McGhee Art. VI, VII, VIII Analyst Senate Finance Committee Senator Joan Huffman, Chair 512-463-0370*

- A state representative will be visiting DeBerry next week to see the system firsthand
- I am working with a member of the state oversight committee
- I am preparing new funding requests for the Sabine River Authority
- We will also reapply to the Texas Water Development Board for future upgrade funding

We are exhausting every avenue for financial assistance.

## DeBerry Water

2 messages

**DeBerry Water** <deberrywsc@gmail.com>  
To: Zach Johnson <zjohnson@sratx.org>

Mon, Jan 5, 2026 at 10:55 PM

Zach,

I have attached photos as well as the invoices in Submittable for the previous SRA grant we were awarded. We want to Thank you for helping us through this process. We submitted an additional request back in September of 2025. If I need to update it for 2026 please let me know.

Thank you,  
Sara Edwards

**Zach Johnson** <zjohnson@sratx.org>  
To: DeBerry Water <deberrywsc@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 6, 2026 at 1:51 PM

Hey Sara,

Thank you for providing the information. Yes, if you will please submit the application for 2026. Our next round of grants will be in March.

Thank you,

Zach Johnson



**ZACH JOHNSON**

Director of Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Sabine River Authority of Texas

Office: 409-746-2192

[zjohnson@sratx.org](mailto:zjohnson@sratx.org)

## 7. Your Role as Community Members

I want to be clear:

- I am not asking you to accept the current water conditions
- I am not asking you to stop calling or reporting issues
- Your communication helps us identify trouble areas quickly

Many of you have my personal cell number; it has always been available on our website. I do work full-time, but I adjust my schedule when needed and work every evening on water system matters.

Due to cost constraints and the loss of Debbie doing dispatch, I have personally answered the system's phone for the past month. . This week, Board Member Steve Werner has volunteered to handle calls so I can focus fully on coordinating well work, chemical treatment planning, and land procurement. His help is deeply appreciated.

We also strongly encourage all members to **attend our monthly board meetings**. These meetings allow you to:

- Stay informed
- Ask questions directly
- Share insights or expertise
- Volunteer your help
- Understand the challenges we are navigating

This system belongs to all of us, and your involvement matters.

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## 8. Our Commitment to You

Your board and volunteers have dedicated countless hours — often late into the night — working to:

- Rebuild missing documentation
- Complete years of audits
- Secure grant funding
- Repair and rehabilitate wells
- Respond to emergencies
- Communicate with agencies and elected officials
- Move this system toward stability

We are tired, but we are not giving up.

We will continue to update you regularly. I will also attach our USDA correspondence and my letter to the House Oversight Committee so you can see our advocacy efforts firsthand.

Thank you for your patience, your willingness to reach out, your advocacy, and your trust as we continue fighting for long-term solutions.

Respectfully,

**Sara Edwards**

Board President

DeBerry Water Supply Corporation