

# WaterOne CURRENT

Winter 2018

We believe in the meaningful work of producing clean water.



The Kansas Section of the American Water Works Association (KSAWWA) recently named WaterOne “Best Tasting Water in Kansas” at its 10th annual conference in Topeka, KS. This marks the fourth time WaterOne has been recognized with this award since 2006, making it the winningest water utility in the state of Kansas. After taking top honors in this year’s regional contest, WaterOne is now eligible to compete in the national taste competition at the AWWA conference in 2019.

The contest presents judges with unlabeled water samples from different utilities. Glasses of the water samples are served at room temperature for the most accurate comparison, since ice or chilled temperatures can alter flavor perceptions. Judges are instructed to “sniff, sip, slurp, swish, and swallow,” which gives them a broad sense of each sample’s flavor properties, aroma, and mouth feel. The samples are then rated on these aesthetic preferences.

WaterOne’s water was also named “Best Tasting Water in Kansas” by the Kansas Rural Water Association earlier this year. For WaterOne, the

awards and recognition are an acknowledgement that its treatment methods produce clean, delicious, and – above all – safe tap water.

WaterOne sources its water from the Kansas and Missouri Rivers. The water then undergoes an extensive multi-barrier treatment process to filter, disinfect, and polish raw river water into a pleasant and refreshing final product. As part of its ongoing investment in its water infrastructure, WaterOne is currently constructing new facilities to utilize ozone as a water treatment method. The new treatment technique will offer a more robust process for reducing or eliminating taste and odor compounds, and that means continued reliability in the taste and quality of each glass of water for WaterOne customers.

“We take great pride in providing fresh and delicious tap water for our customers, and we’re honored to receive this award,” said Michelle Wirth, WaterOne’s Director of Production. “We make sure our water quality goes above and beyond what is required, because that’s a value our customers have come to expect from WaterOne.”



*What's in your water? We want you to know! Learn more at [waterone.org/h2oreports](http://waterone.org/h2oreports)*



# WaterOne Partners With Kansas Groups in Major Water Quality Conservation Effort

A conservation initiative of which WaterOne is a founding partner was formally signed at the 2018 Kansas Governor's Water Conference on November 13th. The Milford Watershed Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is one of the largest efforts undertaken to address water quality concerns in Milford Lake, a reservoir in north-central Kansas that feeds into the Kansas River.

Milford Lake, located near Junction City and Fort Riley, is the largest man-made lake in Kansas. The lake is managed by the Army Corp of Engineers and plays an important regional role in flood control, water supply, recreation, and fish and game habitats. Over 800,000 Kansans, including WaterOne's customers, drink water which originates in Milford Lake and the surrounding watershed.

Unfortunately, the Milford Lake Watershed is vulnerable to nutrient and fertilizer runoff from agricultural operations within its 1.25 million acre area. When conditions are right, the accumulating nutrient runoff feeds harmful algae blooms. The problem is becoming more frequent, and Milford Lake has been subject to toxin-producing blooms almost every summer for the last seven years. The blooms hurt fish and bird populations, shut down large sections of the lake to recreational use, and put drinking water sources at risk for Kansas communities downstream. WaterOne safeguards its customers' water quality through its robust treatment process, but the additional cost for treating lower-quality water could be reduced by preventative upstream practices.

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To respond to this emerging issue, a group of public and private regional partners are working together to help make improvements throughout the watershed. The Regional Conservation Partnership Program was made possible by a \$2.88 million investment through

the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), an agency within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) tasked with working with private landowners to protect natural resources. The RCPP was established through the 2014 Farm Bill, and has officially launched following the Nov. 13th signing in Manhattan, KS.

The RCPP is coordinated by the Kansas Water Office with the financial and in-kind support of WaterOne and almost three dozen other regional agencies and partners. The project partners are working together in a joint effort to reach agricultural producers throughout the watershed and promote water quality conservation funding available through the RCPP. Agricultural producers and landowners are now able to apply for cost-share to implement "Best Management Practices," which are specific improvements to their land and operations that help reduce the impact to water quality within the watershed. These voluntary efforts are a win-win, helping to increase the health and efficiency of Kansas agriculture while improving water quality both locally and downstream.

As a project partner, WaterOne has agreed to make an in-kind and cash contribution in support of the effort. The in-kind support includes assistance with project coordination, outreach planning and consulting, marketing, photography, and web design.

"The Milford RCPP is an unprecedented partnership that brings together both agricultural producers and downstream stakeholders in an effort to preserve our shared resources," said WaterOne General Manager Mike Armstrong. "As a water utility, we have a special understanding of the concept that when it comes to water quality, everyone lives downstream. WaterOne is excited to play a role in this vital conservation project."

Visit [MilfordWatershed.org](http://MilfordWatershed.org) to learn more about this conservation initiative. ♡

## WaterOne Receives Platinum Level "Healthy KC" Certification



WaterOne has been recognized by the Greater KC Chamber of Commerce for its efforts in maintaining a healthy workplace and culture. The Platinum Level "Healthy KC" Certification is the highest award recognizing an organization's excellence in promoting health and wellness policies. The award affirms WaterOne's efforts to be an employer of choice by supporting the well-being of its staff, who perform a vital role in the community.

The "Healthy KC" certification program assesses an organization's efforts to promote health across several categories, including nutrition, physical activity, tobacco cessation, work/life integration, and the design/built environment of the workplace. WaterOne met the criteria through a combination of traditional workplace practices such as providing on-site fitness centers and walking trails, annual biometric screenings, nutritious vending options, continuing education programs, and incentives for quitting tobacco use. The certification also credited WaterOne for innovative ways of encouraging healthy lifestyles,

including on-site yoga instruction, cooking classes, ergonomic work stations, and paid opportunities to volunteer in the community.

As the WaterOne Wellness Program coordinator, Senior Human Resources Generalist Angie McGuire continues to find fresh ways to keep health on the minds of WaterOne staff.

"At an organization of our size, it's important to offer well-being activities and opportunities that can suit a wide spectrum of interests and abilities," said Angie. "We understand that when employees feel healthy at home and at work, it pays dividends for us as an organization. We're always developing our program and trying new things, and employees have been very enthusiastic about unique activities that encourage a healthy lifestyle." ♡

## We are hiring!

Visit [waterone.org/careers](http://waterone.org/careers) to learn more!

## Construction Begins on New Water Tower in Shawnee

To address customer water needs identified in its 2015 Master Plan Update, WaterOne is constructing a 3-million-gallon elevated tank (water tower) in Shawnee, KS. The elevated tank will help meet future service needs due to robust growth in a section of WaterOne's distribution system that includes the city of Shawnee and northwestern Johnson County. Construction of the new tank will ensure consistent water pressure throughout the area, improve distribution system efficiency during periods of peak demand, and continue to guarantee the highest level of fire protection for WaterOne customers.

WaterOne entered into an agreement with the City of Shawnee to locate the tower at the Shawnee Public Works Service Center at 18690 Johnson Drive. Work began in September 2018 and is expected to conclude by May 2020. ♡



The new tower will resemble other WaterOne towers in our service area, such as this tower at 199th and Lackman. When complete, the new tower will be 110' tall.

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SEE WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON  
AT [WATERONE.ORG/PROJECTS](http://WATERONE.ORG/PROJECTS)



# WaterOne

Water District No. 1 of Johnson County

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