



# Ross Valley Sanitary District

## General Manager's Monthly Bulletin

January 2023



Happy 2023! The new year started with a series of storms that brought significant rainfall to the Bay Area. In Kentfield, the rainfall total from December 26 to January 17 hit 26.95 inches and Marin Municipal Water District's seven reservoirs filled to capacity. Through it all, our crews worked hard to maintain system flows and prevent sewer spills. RVSD had one minor storm-related spill on January 11, but generally fared well through this series of atmospheric rivers that caused problems for a lot of sewer systems in the Bay Area.

A glance at the work completed in 2022, shown in the infographic to the left, speaks to the breadth of work our dedicated staff deliver daily to minimize system emergencies that could harm public health and the environment. We look forward to 2023 and continuing to fulfill our mission to enhance the wastewater infrastructure we depend on daily.

Remember, if you see a public sewer emergency such as a manhole overflow, leaking pipe, or sewage on the ground, ***please call the RVSD Emergency Line 24/7 at 415-259-2949 as soon as possible.*** When making an emergency call, be prepared to provide your name, phone number, and address where the incident occurs. After-hours calls will route to our on-call staff for immediate assistance.

# Accomplishments

## Line Maintenance Keeps Things Flowing

As part of sewer line maintenance, staff use a high-pressure hose with specialized nozzles to clean sewer pipes and remove clogs. Each pipe has a different cleaning frequency depending on specific factors such as the pipe material, age, slope, and defects inside the pipe (roots, sags, heavy grease, or grit). Cleaning frequencies of our smaller pipes range from every three months to every three years. Identifying the correct cleaning frequency for each line is critical for infrastructure health and keeping the system flowing.

During a recent cleaning of a pipe on Magnolia Ave in Larkspur, staff extracted four buckets full of asphalt from the pipe. Some asphalt pieces were four to six inches in diameter, and it took staff three cleaning cycles to remove all the debris. Staff determined that the asphalt came from a City paving project on Magnolia Ave and notified their public works department.



*The Vector Ramjet is used by the Maintenance Crew to clean pipes*

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## SmartCover Alert Saves the Day

During the recent wet weather, staff received a high-level alert from a [SmartCover](#), a remote water level sensor mounted to the underside of a manhole lid, installed outside Lift Station 20 in Larkspur near the 101 overpass at E Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Typically, the notification to staff is also received through the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system. However, in this circumstance, staff only received the SmartCover alert.

Once at the station, staff found water leaking into the control cabinet through an emergency light beacon. Unfortunately, the leak shorted the electrical power supply to the pump level controller and alarm. Staff were able to repair the equipment and get the pump station back in service. In this case, a sewer spill was avoided thanks to the SmartCover working as a backup notification system for the pump station.



*Noel Sandoval, the Pump Station Crew Supervisor, showing a Pump Station 25 Alarm Panel*

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## The Benefit of Nitrates in Wastewater

Our staff recently worked with Central Marin Sanitation Agency ([CMSA](#)) staff to replace a nitrate tank at Pump Station 13 in Greenbrae, at Bon Air Center. While this nondescript tank doesn't look like much from the outside, it plays an important role in reducing hydrogen sulfide at the pump station.

Wastewater collection systems house a lot of bacteria that use dissolved oxygen, nitrate, and sulfate for respiration to consume it. Bacteria prefer dissolved oxygen and nitrate for respiration, but when concentrations are low, bacteria will switch to consuming sulfate. The byproduct of this process is



hydrogen sulfide, a toxic gas that causes odor and corrosion problems to the collection system.

To reduce hydrogen sulfide build-up, a nitrate station is installed at specific pump stations to pre-treat the wastewater as it is conveyed to the treatment plant. During low-flow, warm weather months, the nitrate is injected into the pump station wet well. In response, bacteria will consume the nitrate instead of the sulfate, thus reducing hydrogen sulfide gas in the system. The by-product from using nitrate is harmless nitrogen gas that makes up 78 percent of the atmosphere, a win-win!



*Nitrate tank outside Pump Station 13*

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## Lateral Loan Program Updates

The District recently adopted Ordinance 74 amending the framework and guidelines for the [Lateral Replacement Loan Program](#) (LRLP) to better assist ratepayers with the cost of replacing their private sewer laterals.

For property owners that cannot afford the full cost of a lateral replacement, the LRLP offers a low interest loan that can be paid back over 10 years through semi-annual assessments on the property tax bill.

Updates to the new Ordinance 74 include:

- Revisions to the application requirements so that applicants no longer need to submit two bids, a video inspection, and a private lateral inspection report.
- A new loan application deadline starting **after** the lateral replacement work has been completed and passed District final inspection. Applicants will now have **30 days** from the final inspection date to submit an application and final itemized invoice.
- Interest rate change from a rigid 3.6 percent to the 10 year U.S. Treasury rate plus 0.5 percent per annum (fixed), so the interest rate can adjust and stay competitive with market conditions.
- Language to clarify Common Interest Development (CID) and Homeowners Association (HOA) eligibility.



*A sanitary sewer lateral*

In July 2021, the Board also reviewed and updated the parallel Lateral Replacement Grant Program (LRGP) and made changes that have improved participation in that program. Similar improvements were approved to the LRLP for ease of application, consistency and program effectiveness.

# Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Project Updates

## Larkspur Pump Stations 14, 24, & 25 Improvements

Construction continues at PS 14, the District's major pump station serving the southern half of Larkspur and located adjacent to Hall Middle School. Final paving at PS 14 is still pending and will be scheduled soon. The backup power systems for generators at PS 24 & 25, located along South Eliseo Drive have also been upgraded, but the generators are still delayed from supply-chain issues. Visit the [project webpage](#) for more information.



*Construction at PS 14*

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## FY 2022/23 Gravity Sewer Improvements

The contractor Glosage Engineering continues to work on a sewer main easement near Wolfe Grade and Sir Francis Drake Blvd. in Greenbrae. The contractor is also completing work in an easement adjacent to Vista Grande in Greenbrae and on a main in Kentfield along Oak Ave. Next, the contractor plans to begin work in San Anselmo along Santa Barbara Avenue, Santa Cruz Ave, Salinas Ave. Visit the [project webpage](#) for more information.



*Glosage installing a new sewer main in the Vista Grande Easement*

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## Lift Station 20, 31, 32 Pump Stations Improvements

Staff have completed review of the 65 percent design plans and have provided comments to the design firm. This project addresses aging equipment at minor lift stations, prioritized by our 2021 Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (IAMP). Visit the [project webpage](#) for more information and updates.

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## Woodland Road Creek Crossings and Capacity Improvements

Staff are wrapping up the final design details for this project. Visit the [project webpage](#) for more information and updates.

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call, be prepared to provide your name, phone number, and address where the incident occurs. After-hours calls will route to our on-call staff for immediate assistance.

Happy New Year,



**Steve Moore, General Manager**

## Remember



RVSD is on Nextdoor. Subscribe to our page [here](#) as one of the ways you can find out if there will be construction in your neighborhood.



We are also on LinkedIn! Follow our page [here](#) to stay up to date on current job announcements and other news about the District.

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## Get Involved

**Members of the public are invited to attend RVSD Regular Board Meetings safely and remotely from a computer, tablet or smartphone.**

Ross Valley Sanitary District Board Meetings are typically held on the third Wednesday of each month at 5 p.m. These Board Meetings will continue to be held virtually until further notice.

**The next RVSD Regular Board meeting is scheduled for  
Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 5 p.m. via Zoom.**

[Meeting Access](#)

[Agenda Posting](#)

**Want an alert when the next Board meeting agenda is available?**

Please write to our [Clerk of the Board](#) to request being included in upcoming agenda alerts.

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## Sewer FAQs

Review our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that explain sewer overflows, what to do if you see one, and other commonly asked questions about the sewer system.

[Review FAQs](#)

## Before Hiring a Plumbing Contractor

Check the California Department of Consumer Affairs Contractors State License Board (CSLB) for more information.  
Make sure any plumber you hire is familiar with district policies and programs  
for any private property sewer emergency.

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### Contact Us

#### Phone & Email

[415-259-2949](tel:415-259-2949) (24/7)  
Email: [info@rvsd.org](mailto:info@rvsd.org)

#### Hours

Mon - Fri  
7:30 a.m. - noon  
1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

#### Address

2960 Kerner Blvd  
San Rafael, CA 94901

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