

General Managers' Monthly Bulletin

September 2020

Ross Valley Sanitary District provides this monthly news bulletin to stay connected to the community we serve. We welcome your feedback on any information in the bulletin, and if at any time you no longer prefer to receive this information please contact us via email at info@rvsd.org. Visit us online at www.RVSD.org for more information.

Heading into fall we continue to all grapple with COVID-19 and the recent fires impacting air quality. Through all of these challenges, our staff remain dedicated to their work, providing the community with essential wastewater services.

Our work ensures the daily operation and maintenance of approximately 200 miles of collection sewer lines and 19 pumping stations, while observing appropriate physical distance requirements using sanitizer and wearing masks. The County Health Order has been implemented in our day-to-day operations, as well as our capital improvement projects, which continue to move forward.



RVSD Field Workers

The [Laurel Grove Sewer Rehabilitation Project](#) is proceeding smoothly and will be wrapped up by mid-November. An upsized parallel sewer has been installed under Sir Francis Drake Blvd., and the night work originally required by the County was avoided due to light traffic conditions. Work to upsize the old sewer along Laurel Grove Avenue from six- to eight- and ten-inches is complete. Work on Quisisana Dr. will begin around the first week of November. Three old brick manholes less than three-feet in diameter are being replaced as well. The capacity increase here will eliminate chronic sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) and better seal the system from excessive storm water infiltration and inflow. This project is the last to be completed as required by the 2013 Cease and Desist Order from the Regional Water Board.

Our [Force Main Appurtenances Project](#) in Larkspur is on schedule to be complete by

the end of October. At this point, half of the eight appurtenances have been replaced and installed in new vaults. Installation of the remaining four appurtenances has been postponed due to valve and vault manufacturing delays attributable to COVID-19. Work will proceed as these items are due to be shipped soon enough to meet our scheduled completion timeline.

What are force mains and appurtenances? When wastewater needs to flow uphill, sewer systems include pump stations powered by electricity (with diesel backup), and their outgoing pipelines are known as "force mains", which are sewers under pressure. The District force main system was significantly upgraded in the 1980s to transport wastewater "uphill" to the Central Marin Sanitation Agency (CMSA) treatment plant along Hwy. 580 in San Rafael. All of the wastewater from Ross Valley and Corte Madera reaches CMSA via pumping through force mains.

This project upgrades "appurtenances" to the force main system which help it to function, including five air release valves and three plug valves. Air release valves allow sewer gases to escape the force main system and not accumulate over time or at high elevation points, thereby reducing pipe capacity for wastewater. Plug valves allow sections of force mains to be isolated from pressure and emptied in case maintenance of these pipelines is necessary, or if there is a force main break. With completion of these improvements, the force main system that flows to the CMSA treatment plant will be more resilient and reliable.

Cleanup activities at the [Larkspur Landing](#) former treatment plant site, as required by the U.S. EPA, are complete and planting of vegetation (via hydro seeding) is also complete. The District selected Century Urban last month to provide real estate consultant services to help develop a schedule and plan to engage the public and the City of Larkspur about this unique site. On September 30 at 4pm, the Board is holding a [special meeting](#) to receive information on conceptual approaches to disposition of this property. The materials presented at the meeting will be posted on the District's [Larkspur Landing](#) information webpage. Watch for more information as these efforts move forward.

About a year ago, the District restarted use of CMSA's truck fill station for recycled water, thereby using our recycled wastewater for sewer system cleaning (hydro-jetting) and dust control at the Larkspur Landing cleanup project.



Recycled water use at Larkspur Landing

To use recycled water, we had to retrofit our two sewer-cleaning Ramjet vehicles to prevent cross-contamination of potable water supplies and address operational issues related to build-up of debris in our intake filters. We used 127,329 gallons of recycled water in the past fiscal year (August 2019 - June 2020). In the past two months the District used 62,432 gallons of recycled water for sewer cleaning and dust control, almost half of the previous year's total amount.

This past month, we retrofitted two additional sewer cleaning vehicles, our Harben high pressure jetters, to be able to use recycled water, increasing our use of recycled water even more.

By using recycled water for sewer cleaning and

dust control, we reduce the potable water demand in our area, keeping extra water in the reservoirs for water supply and available for environmental needs. The local water supply comes roughly from 75% Lagunitas Creek and 25% Russian River. Both water bodies support sensitive salmonid species like Coho salmon and steelhead trout, as well as recreational uses worth protecting. The more we conserve and recycle water, the more water we have available for times of drought as well as for environmental uses.



Harben water truck with purple piping for recycled water and blue pipes for potable water

After our first year of piloting water recycling, we used 189,761 gallons of recycled water, enough to provide potable water to three households for a year. With four vehicles now equipped to handle recycled water, we expect to increase our rate of recycled water use which is tracked in our monthly metrics reports presented at monthly Board meetings.

The District completed accepting 2020 applications for the [Student Scholarship Program](#) on September 30. Each qualified 2020 Scholarship recipient will receive \$1,000 in financial assistance to help support their post-high school education. Recipients will be notified in early-October.

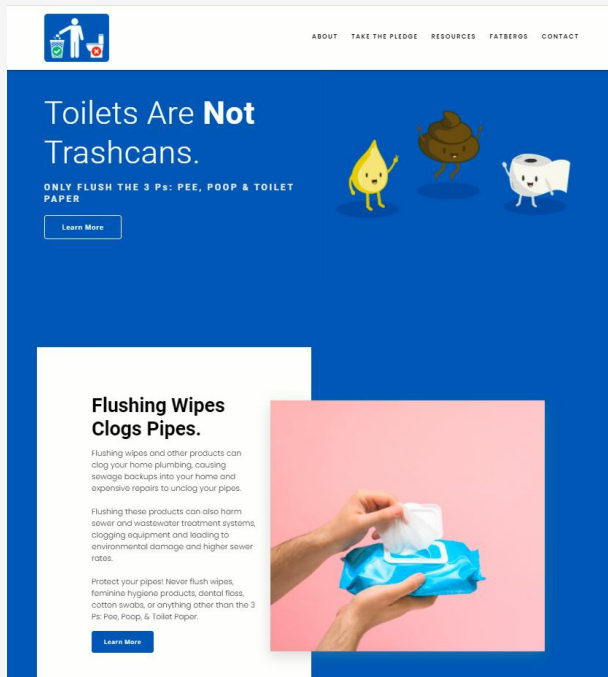
Safety is a Top Priority

Our fully trained staff are equipped to comply with local, state and federal safety and quality protocols for managing the Ross Valley sanitary sewer system in your neighborhood. Every day, their work ensures our wastewater collection system, pumping equipment, and essential District services continue to run smoothly. Additional reminders to be aware of include:

- **Access to our public lobby and other facilities remains closed to the public and all non-essential visitors until further notice.** We continue to issue permits (payments by check only), schedule essential inspection appointments, and process grant and loan applications electronically via info@rvsd.org, Monday through Friday. Call 415-259-2949 for assistance.
- **Please remember to only flush toilet paper.** "Flushable" wipes (which are not biodegradable), paper towels, rags and shop towels do not break down. They clog your home's pipes and contribute to clogs and overflows in the public sewer system, effecting health and safety of the entire community and environment. RVSD has a series of informational videos available on our [Sustainability page](#).
- **If you have a public sewer emergency, such as a manhole overflow, leaking pipe or smell or see sewage on the ground, please contact us immediately for 24-hour response at 415-259-2949.**

Please know we are always happy to assist you with answering any questions related to the sewer system. Call us at **415-259-2949** or email us at info@rvsd.org. Thank you!

Steve Moore, General Manager



[webpage](#) for more information.

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) has released a long awaited nationwide study that provides an estimate of increased utility operating costs due to the impact of wipes being flushed down toilets instead going into the trash.

The California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA) collaborated with NACWA and other water associations to produce this report.

[Go here on CASA's website](#) to see the full report and visit NACWA's new [Toilets Are Not Trashcans](#)

Please remember to ALWAYS put wipes, paper towels and similar products in the trash, not the toilet. ONLY toilet paper and human waste are flushable.

[Click here](#) to see videos on how to properly dispose of expired and/or unused medications, Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG), and more! Refer to the links below to learn more about what to do with "flushable" wipes and similar items.

- [California Association of Sanitation Agencies](#) (CASA) website
- [Avoid Fatbergs!](#) Don't Flush Wipes Due to Virus, California Says
- [California Issues Warning](#) about Disinfecting Wipes
- [California Water Board](#) Do NOT Flush Wipes News Advisory
- [Disinfecting Wipes Being Flushed Down Toilets](#) Causing Major Pipe Problems

Important Reminders:

[Click here](#) to review our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that explain sewer overflows and what to do.

If you see or experience a public sewer emergency, call the RVSD Emergency Line 24/7 at 415-259-2949. Common reasons to call include a manhole overflow, leaking pipe, odors or visible sewage on the ground. Our emergency crews are available 365 days per year, 24 hours per day, seven days per week!

Before you hire a plumbing contractor, [click here](#) to 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.

All of this information is found online [here](#), or by clicking "EMERGENCY" on our

website [homepage](#).

Our ongoing Capital Improvement Program (CIP) construction projects continue during the COVID-19 Shelter in Place Order as these are essential infrastructure upgrades.

Sewer line repair and rehabilitation projects help protect public health and the environment by reducing the risk of sewer overflows. You can view [upcoming projects being planned and going out to bid](#) as well as recently completed projects throughout our service area.

Visit our [Capital Improvement Program](#) (CIP) webpage for the latest project information and updates for each of the projects listed below:

- [Force Main Appurtenances Project](#) (Larkspur), replacing eight valves on the Force Main system - Construction is anticipated to be complete by the end of October.
- [Laurel Grove Sewer Rehabilitation Project](#) (Kentfield - between Sir Francis Drake Blvd. and Makin Grade) to increase capacity and prevent sanitary sewer overflows. Construction is anticipated to be complete by mid-November.
- Larkspur Pump Station 14 Improvements and South Eliseo Pump Stations 24 & 25 generator replacements (Larkspur) - Projects are currently in the design phase.
- [Larkspur Landing Cleanup Project](#) - Cleanup activities are complete.

[COVID-19 Exposure Control Plan](#) measures were first adopted by the District in April 2020 and are updated as needed in response to local and State mandates. These measures are in place and will be adhered to throughout construction on these projects, as well as in our daily operations and maintenance practices.

Additional information about COVID-19 can be found at the links provided below:

- [Marin County Health and Human Services](#) - FAQ for COVID-19
- [The Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) and Federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration \(OSHA\)](#) - COVID-19 Guidance for Water/Wastewater Systems

Want to receive timely construction updates? [Click here](#) to select the project you want updates for or call us at 415-259-2949.



Due to current COVID-19 conditions, members of the public can attend RVSD regular Board Meetings from their computer, tablet or smartphone.

Ross Valley Sanitary District Board Meetings are typically held the third Wednesday of each month at 5:00 PM.

The RVSD Regular Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 16,

2020 at 5:00 PM.


[Click here](#) for updated meeting access information 24 hours before the meeting. [Check the agenda posting here](#) 72 hours before each meeting for open session time.

Want an alert when the next Board meeting agenda is available? Please write to our [Clerk of the Board](#) to request to be included in upcoming agenda alerts.



Ross Valley Sanitary District

Your dollars ARE at work!
Protecting Public Health and the Environment



We are replacing outdated infrastructure and enhancing local wastewater system reliability!

These projects help protect public health and the environment by **reducing** the risk of sewer overflows.

RVSD fully complies with local, state, and federal safety and quality protocols for managing our sewer system.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CONSTRUCTION
Visit: www.RVSD.org/194
Email: Info@rvsd.org
Call: RVSD Office 415-259-2949

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[Click here to visit RVSD.org](http://www.RVSD.org)