

THE HERON

Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District

Fall 2022

Treatment Plant Upgrade Nearly Complete!

Improved Wastewater Treatment Quality, Capacity, and Reliability for Las Gallinas Valley; More Recycled Water Supply for All Marin County

The District is happy to announce that our Secondary Treatment Plant Upgrade and Recycled Water Expansion Project, which began construction in spring of 2019, is almost complete! A key part of this project, the expansion of our recycled water production facility, was completed in early 2021. Now, after a great deal of hard work by staff and contractors, we are nearing the end of the entire project with new, upgraded facilities to carry out LGVSD's mission to protect public health and the environment through effective wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling services.

In the upcoming Spring 2023 issue of *The Heron* we'll provide more information about the elements of this monumental upgrade project, after we've officially "cut the ribbon" to commemorate its completion. In the meantime, you can get project details at LGVSD.org/construction.



Top: One of the two new secondary clarifiers.
Bottom: New aeration basin with bio-wheels.

Welcome Curtis Paxton, New General Manager



After an extensive, four-month recruitment process, Curtis Paxton was selected as the District's new General Manager. He began work at the District on

August 8, 2022. The Board is grateful to Chris DeGabriele for filling in as Interim General Manager during the months prior to Curtis joining the District.

Curtis, who lives in Napa, is a graduate of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and holds a Professional Civil Engineer license in California as well as a Grade 5 wastewater treatment operator license. Prior to becoming the District's General Manager, he most recently served as Director of Utilities for the City of Vacaville, and previously as General Manager and an Executive Team Member for various water and wastewater Districts in Southern California.

Curtis is passionate about public service, special districts, and resource recovery, and highly values the District's top priority of protecting public health and the environment through its wastewater collection, treatment, and other services. The District Board and staff are happy to have Curtis as part of the team.

Newest District Board Member Nearing One Year of Service

Ron Ford has served since January, 2022



Nearly one year ago, the District Board of Directors appointed Ron Ford to fill a vacant seat for the 10-month remainder of the term for that seat. Since there were no challengers for that seat on the November 2022 ballot, he now serves for a full four-year term. A 34-year resident in the area served by the District, Ron is on the District's 2022 Ad Hoc Engineering Committee helping oversee the completion of the facility upgrade, and represents the District on the North Bay Water Reuse Authority, Marin Special Districts Association, 2022 Operations Control Center Ad Hoc Committee, and 2022 Human Resources Ad Hoc Committee.

Kids' Corner Answer Key

- 1. **Dominator** – Boom truck used for pump station maintenance
- 2. **CNG Camera/Flusher Combo** – capable of cleaning and televising sewer mains
- 3. **Rodder** – Used in the mechanical cleaning of sewer mains
- 4. **Easement Machine** – Smaller flusher truck used to maintain sewer easements



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Wildlife Spotlight

Facts about the North American River Otter

Did you know that by the early 1900s, two centuries of unregulated fur trapping for their pelts had nearly wiped out the North American River Otter? Development and pollution degraded otter habitats in the San Francisco Bay Area, and local populations dwindled further. River otters have made a remarkable comeback in California, and have been spotted right here in the District's reclamation area. Here are interesting facts about this cute semi-aquatic mammal.

River otters:

- Inhabit more than just rivers, and are comfortable in any kind of water.
- Prefer water bordered by woods and with wetlands or marshes nearby.
- Can dive to a depth of 60 feet.
- Can stay submerged for a minute or more.
- Propel through the water as fast as 8 miles per hour, using its tail's strong, undulating movement.
- Spend two-thirds of their time on land, where they can run at speeds of up to 15 miles an hour.
- Have long whiskers which they use to detect prey in dark or cloudy water.
- Must consume up to 20 percent of their body weight every day to sustain their constant activity.
- Seek prey along the coasts of bays and wetlands, in the ocean, and in freshwater lakes.



Credit: Dmitry Azovisev

- Have a varied diet, including fish, crayfish, crabs, frogs, birds' eggs, birds, and reptiles such as turtles.
- Can prey on small mammals such as muskrats or mice.
- Can grow to three-to-four feet long including their tail (which is about 1/3 of its total length), and can weigh from 11 - 30 pounds.
- Are very playful, and communicate with whistles, yelps, growls, and screams, as well as touch and body posture.



Credit: Bob Gunderson, courtesy of River Otter Ecology Project (riverottterecology.org)



Programs Help Offset Your Costs

Low-Income Sewer Rate Assistance and Lateral Repair Assistance

Low-Income Sewer Rate Assistance Program

Earlier this year the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District Board of Directors established a new Low-Income Sewer Rate Assistance Program. This program was developed to help low-income customers by providing a 10% rate discount for qualifying residential ratepayers. If you are enrolled in the PG&E Care Program and own your home, you most likely qualify.

To get more information and learn about eligibility for this program, please visit lgvsd.org/lisrap or call 415-472-1734.

Get Help with the Costs of Sewer Lateral Repair or Replacement

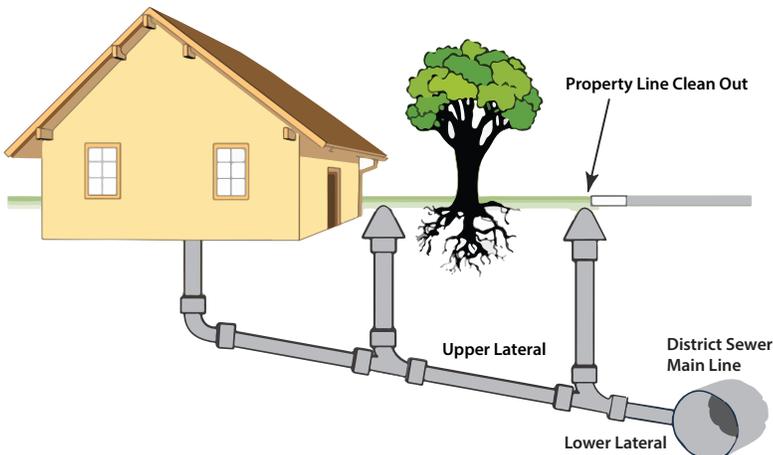
A sewer lateral is the private pipeline that runs from your home to the sewer main. It's the property owner's responsibility to keep the sewer lateral in good condition so it does not overflow or backup. As these pipelines age, they can develop cracks and leaks or be blocked – which can cause sewer

backups and potential spills and overflows. This is most often the result of tree or large shrub roots growing into the line (it's a good idea to avoid planting new trees or shrubs near sewer laterals or lines, or plant only appropriate species that are less likely to cause problems). Unfortunately, repairing damage to a lateral can be very expensive for homeowners.

But the good news is that the District has a Sewer Lateral Assistance Program that provides low interest loans to lessen the burden homeowners face when a sewer lateral needs repair or replacement.

Customers can apply to borrow up to \$10,000 to finance sewer lateral repair/replacement work, with 10 years to pay back the money at a low interest rate of 2%. For more information, please visit lgvsd.org (click on Sewer Lateral Assistance Program).

You're encouraged to take advantage of this program if your sewer lateral is in need of repair or replacement, to help make sure you're doing your part to prevent overflows or backups.



Join the District in Helping Protect the Environment

Mercury Thermometer Exchange and Battery Recycling Program

The Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District encourages all residents to participate in this **FREE** program that helps protect the environment from toxic chemicals that are present in everyday products.

- **Exchange your mercury thermometer for a new digital one.** Did you know that even tiny amounts of mercury can be a serious threat to the health of people, wildlife, and the environment?



District residents can bring old, mercury-filled thermometers to our main office for safe disposal, and exchange them for new digital thermometers.

- **Drop off your old household batteries.** Household batteries contain at least 22 toxic elements including mercury, lead, and cadmium. The District provides you the opportunity to drop off your old household batteries for proper, safe recycling.



Bring these items for safe disposal/recycling, at no cost, to the District Office, 101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300, in San Rafael. If you have questions about the free drop-off/exchange program, please call (415) 472-1734. Program is limited to households only.

For information on how you can safely dispose of other household hazardous waste items, visit the Marin Household Hazardous Waste Facility website at marinhhw.com.

101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300, San Rafael, CA 94903
Phone (415) 472-1734 • Fax (415) 499-7715
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Board of Directors

Megan Clark
Ronald Ford
Craig K. Murray
Judy Schriebman
Crystal J. Yezman

Board Meetings are

held at 4:00 PM on
the first and third
Thursday of each month,
presently via Zoom
teleconference

ECRWSS – Postal Customer

District Administration: Curtis Paxton, General Manager

The District received the District Transparency Certificate of Excellence by the Special District Leadership Foundation for 2022-2025 in recognition of its outstanding efforts to promote transparency and good governance.

 Printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks.



Match the Truck with its Name!

Here are names and pictures of some of the big trucks used by Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District for our wastewater collection process. Can you guess which name belongs to which truck? Write the name of the truck on the line under each picture — see if you can get them all!

Rodder • CNG Camera/Flusher Combo • Dominator • Easement Machine

