

THE HERON

Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District

Spring 2019



Major Upgrades to Treatment Plant Getting Underway

There's a lot of construction going on at the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District treatment plant — in fact, we're now in the midst of the largest capital improvement project in our history. It's all being done to ensure that the District can continue to provide the exceptional service and high-quality technical processes that the community needs and deserves, for generations to come.

This massive upgrade project encompasses two areas: the secondary wastewater treatment plant, which is subject to increasing regulatory compliance, requires significant equipment upgrades, and; the recycled water treatment facility (operating since 2012) is being expanded to nearly quadruple its capacity.

Major components of the project include:

- Expansion of the treatment plant's wet weather treatment capacity
- Construction of new primary effluent pump station and two secondary clarifiers

- Expansion of the recycled water facility's capacity from 1.4 to over 5 million gallons per day (MGD)
- Rerouting of the force main pipeline
- Realignment of the treatment plant's perimeter road
- Removal of backwash reject water discharge basins
- Upgrades to the electrical systems at the plant, and addition of a new standby generator
- Installation of a new utility transformer, and realignment of power poles
- Upgrading of the Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition (SCADA) system
- Modifications to the existing disinfection system
- Other related work such as grading, fencing, pipelines, landscaping, and paving

The project will be accomplished in multiple phases, utilizing all the skills and resources of the plant operations staff as they continue operation of existing processes while transitioning to the operation of the upgraded facilities.

Construction to Temporarily Impact Access Road and Parking in Reclamation Area

Many people visit the District's 383-acre Reclamation Area and its trails, where they enjoy wildflowers, a variety of birds and other wildlife, and beautiful views of San Pablo Bay, Mt. Tamalpais, and wetlands.



During the major construction in and around the wastewater treatment plant, there will be necessary but temporary impacts to public access to the Reclamation Area — periodic road closures will take place, along with periodic, temporary closures of the parking area.

The District will let the community know about access issues when they are scheduled — but motorists in the area should always drive slowly on the access road and watch for oncoming traffic, construction equipment and workers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.



To receive email updates on construction and access/parking limitations, sign up at LGVSD.org

Free Recycling — Used Batteries, Flourescent Bulbs, Mercury Thermometers

Did you know that old mercury thermometers, fluorescent and CFL bulbs, and batteries — all common household items — contain toxic chemicals that can be released into the environment if not disposed of properly? The District provides a safe way for its residential customers to dispose of those items (not for commercial drop off).

- **Exchange your old mercury thermometer for a new digital one, free!**

Bring your old, mercury thermometers to the District's main office and exchange them for new digital thermometers. An old mercury thermometer can contain up to 1.1 grams of this highly toxic substance – that's enough to pollute up to 2 million gallons of water.



- **Free drop off of fluorescent and CFL bulbs.** These items contain small amounts of mercury vapor which can be released when dumped in the trash.



- **Free battery drop off.** Household batteries contain at least 22 toxic elements including mercury, lead, cadmium, and others.

Recycle or drop off these items at the District's main office, located at 300 Smith Ranch Road, San Rafael.

This is an easy way to do your part to safely and properly dispose of these everyday items, and help protect the environment from toxic chemicals. If you have questions about the free drop-off program, please call (415) 472-1734.



Staff of the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District



LGVSD Welcomes New Board Member, Appoints Two to Management Staff

Over the last few months, the District has welcomed two new management team members and a new Board member!



Crystal J. Yezman was elected to the Board in November 2018 for a four-year term. She's been on the front lines managing water/wastewater utilities for over 20 years, working for San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Portland (OR) Water Bureau, and Marin Municipal Water District. With her deep experience and education (a Bachelor's in environmental science and a Master's in civil and environmental engineering specializing in water and wastewater design), Ms. Yezman is a wonderful asset on the District's Board of Directors.



Mike Prinz joined the District as General Manager in November 2018. He was most recently Deputy Director, Utilities Operations, for the Santa Rosa Water Depart-

ment where he was responsible for the operation and maintenance of Santa Rosa's Laguna Treatment Plant. Mr. Prinz' experience with Santa Rosa Water goes back to 2002, when he started as an Associate Civil Engineer before moving up to Supervising Engineer, then becoming Deputy Director. Throughout that time, he supervised dozens of employees and managed millions of dollars in capital projects, while serving a population of nearly a quarter million people.



Robert Ruiz has been the District's Administrative Services Manager since December 2018. He brings to the District a very

strong finance background, having worked for over 20 years in a variety of critical fiscal and management roles in the private and public sector. Prior to joining the District, Mr. Ruiz was Finance Director for the City of Wasco, and before that he held that same role for the City of Arvin. He's also worked as Chief Financial Officer, Senior Vice President of Finance, and other senior roles at private companies.

To Flush, or Not to Flush... It's Really Not a Question!

Some so-called “flushables” cause damage and overflows

Everyone learns at an early age not to put “un-flushable” items in the toilet. Lots of kids learn that the hard way that when they try to flush those un-flushables, and it creates a big mess! Not to mention the damage that such items can do to the sewer system.

What about those products which claim to be “flushable,” but really are not? For example, baby wipes and personal wipes. These are often advertised as being flushable, but the reality is that they can cause a lot of difficulties in your plumbing, in the District's sewer system, and at the treatment plant. In their early years, these products were made of a stretchy, ultra-durable plastic material which was impossible to break apart with water alone. Today, most manufacturers have switched to a cellulose substrate which offers a slightly better ability to break down; however, this material still causes serious

clogging and requires intervention, in order to fully break down.

Unfortunately, we've seen an increase in so-called flushable items caught in our sewer pipes or conveyed to the District's treatment plant, where they have been known to damage expensive equipment.

But here's a simple, easy-to-remember household rule: **ONLY toilet paper should be put into your toilet**—anything else could very well cause an expensive problem.

These common household items — even if they say “flushable” — should be disposed of in the trash, **NOT** in the sink or toilet:

- Baby wipes, personal wipes, household cleaning wipes
- Cotton swabs, makeup pads
- Tampons, applicators, pads
- Condoms and their wrappers

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See this humorous (and danceable!) music video “Can't Flush This!” at www.lgvsd.org — scroll down to “What's New”. It conveys the important message that baby wipes, personal wipes, and other products are not flushable.

Proposed Increased Sewer Rates to Fund Critical Services and Upgrades

Public Hearing is scheduled for June 6

In 2015, a plan was approved by the District Board of Directors that detailed sewer service charges through 2019-20. Those proposed rate changes were designed to provide the necessary funding for a critical expansion and upgrade of the District's treatment plant, at an estimated cost of \$62 million. Each year, as a new budget is considered, new rates and service charges are also presented in a public meeting for discussion and Board consideration of approval.

The proposed 2019-20 increases (the final year in the five-year program of rate changes) will be reviewed by the Board for approval at a public hearing on June 6, 2019. The hearing will take place at the District's office, 300 Smith Ranch Road in San Rafael. Owners of all property within the District will receive a formal notice of this public hearing. Those property owners have the right to protest the proposed rates. If a majority of owners of affected parcels within the District submit written protests against the proposed changes, the District will not approve the sewer service charge increases.

Please see the “Treatment Plant Upgrade” article on page 1 for more information on some of the key, ongoing infrastructure projects which are funded by sewer rates.



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Board of Directors

Craig K. Murray
Rabi Elias
Judy Schriebman
Megan Clark
Crystal Yezman

Board Meetings are

held at 4:30 PM on
the first and third
Thursday of each month

District Administration

Mike Prinz, General Manager



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ECRWSS – Postal Customer

"To Flush, or Not to Flush" continued from page 2

- Bandages, band aids
- Teeth whitening strips
- Dental floss
- Hair
- Kitty litter

This is one way you can help keep the sewer system operating at top efficiency—simply remember that toilet paper is the only thing that you should put in the toilet.

*Personal and cleaning wipes
accumulating on bar screens
at the treatment plant.*

