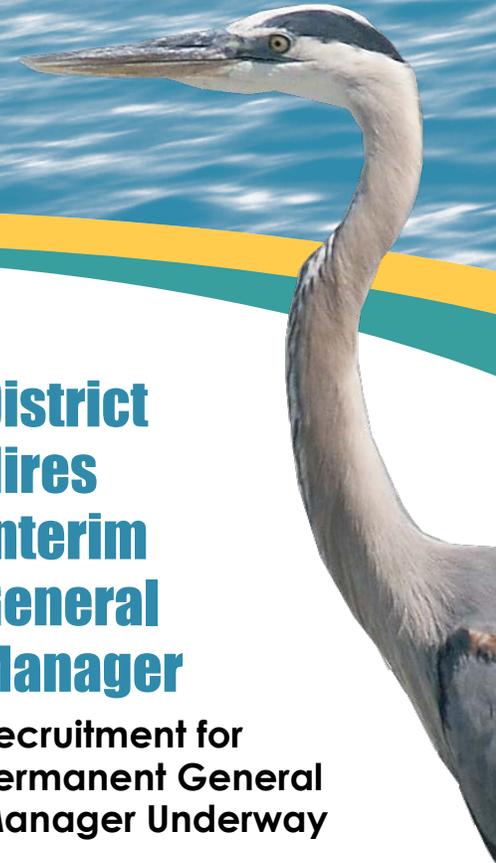


# THE HERON

Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District

Spring 2022



## Recycled Water — Even More Important During Drought

For many years, the District has recycled a portion of its incoming wastewater, treating it so it can be repurposed for non-potable uses. Last year's completion of Phase 1 of the Secondary Treatment Plant Upgrade and Recycled Water Expansion Project effectively quadrupled the District's recycled water production capacity to over 5 million gallons per day — that's nearly 2 billion gallons a year! Every gallon of recycled water saves a gallon of fresh water for critical uses in homes, businesses, hospitals, and schools throughout the region.

A large portion of the District's recycled water is distributed to Marin Municipal Water District and

North Marin Water District. Those agencies then sell it for use in landscape irrigation, car washes, cooling towers, commercial laundries, toilet flushing, and other non-potable needs that might otherwise be met with fresh drinking water.

The District is proud to be providing this reliable, sustainable source of recycled water. Marin County, the region, and much of the western US is experiencing a drought of historic proportions, making this drought-proof recycled water supply even more critical. For more information about our recycled water facility, visit [lgvsd.org/recycledwater](http://lgvsd.org/recycledwater).



Recycled water membrane filter system

## District Hires Interim General Manager

### Recruitment for Permanent General Manager Underway



The Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District Board of Directors has retained Chris DeGabriele as Interim General Manager. Mr.

DeGabriele started at the District on January 31, 2022, and brings decades of professional experience including 22 years as the General Manager of the North Marin Water District in Novato.

The District Board is now in the process of recruiting to fill the General Manager position on a permanent basis. It has hired a professional recruiting firm to assist with a nationwide search, and is hopeful that local candidates will also apply. A new general manager is expected to be hired later this year. Visit the District website at [www.lgvsd.org](http://www.lgvsd.org) for updates.



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## We Can All Do Our Part to Achieve Zero Waste

Zero waste is the conservation of all resources through responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials — without burning and with no discharges to landfill, water, or air.

In addition to wastewater collection and treatment, the District contracts with Marin Sanitary Service to help move the region toward zero waste by providing for garbage, organics, and recycling pickup within the unincorporated County areas of the District.

Food waste comprises 29% of all materials placed in garbage carts by residential customers, and 35% of landfilled material from commercial customers is food. When food waste is sent to the landfill, it breaks down anaerobically and releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Landfills are the third largest source of methane emissions in the United States, making it important that your food waste is not tossed in your garbage (dark) cart (multi-family units may have dumpsters). California's Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy (SB 1383) has set goals to reduce emissions from short-lived climate pollutants, such as food waste.

When your food scraps are placed in your organics (green) cart, they are taken to a facility that converts them into compost.

*Continued on page 4...*

## Sewer Rate Increase Anticipated

### Low Income Assistance Program Can Help Customers in Need

In 2021, the District Board of Directors approved a two-year sewer rate increase to help keep up with escalating costs of providing the District's critical services to its customers. At that time, the Board determined that the second-year increase (for fiscal year 2022/23) would be no more than 9%. Based on current financial forecasts, the pending rate increase may be less than the 9% originally approved. **A final decision on the rate increase for 2022/23 will be considered by the Board at their June 16, 2022 meeting.**

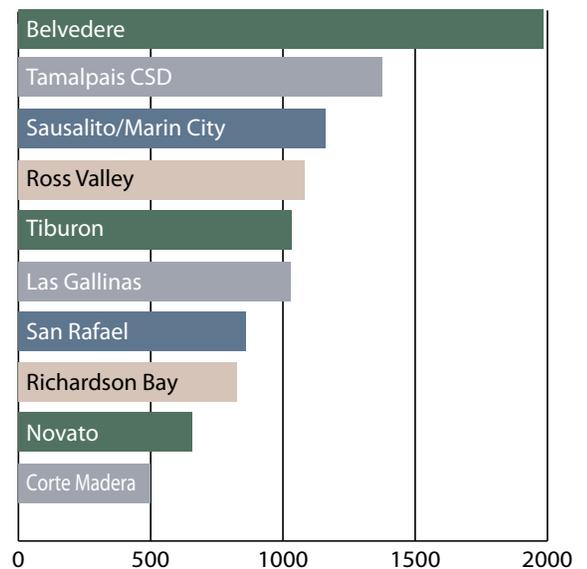
We understand that any increase could be a concern for some customers. The District's new Low-Income Sewer Rate Assistance Program was developed to help low- and fixed-income customers by providing 10% reduction for qualifying residential ratepayers. More information about this program and applications are online at [www.lgvsd.org/LISRAP](http://www.lgvsd.org/LISRAP).

It's important to point out that District customers pay only for the actual cost of their service, as set by ordinance, based on an independent Wastewater Cost of Services Study completed in April 2021. Rates are set to provide sufficient

funding for current and future operation and maintenance and to fund the capital improvement budget. The District's rates are comparable to other Marin County communities.

District rates provide for continued effective and efficient high-quality and reliable wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling. Rates also advance protection of the environment and the public health, compliance with ever-increasing state and federal regulations, continued sound fiscal practices, and funding of critical infrastructure improvements throughout the District.

### Sewer Rate Comparison in Marin County as of April 2022

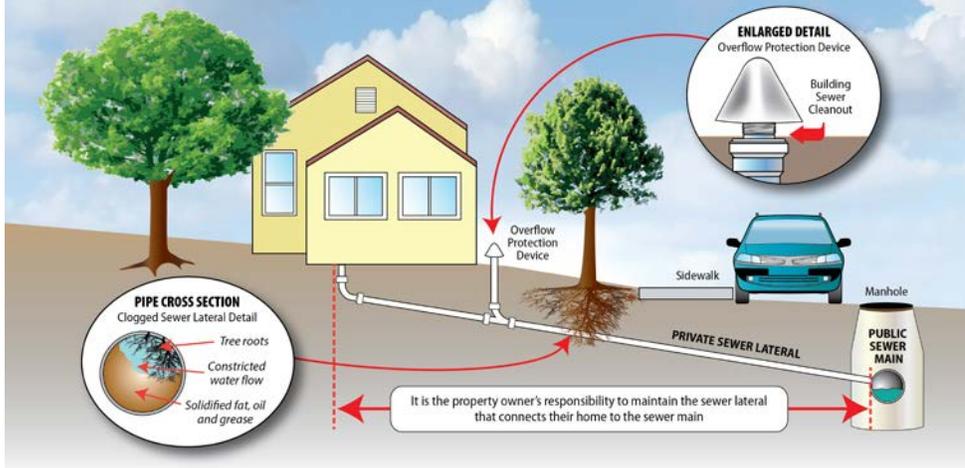


## Do Your Part to Save Water

Minimal rainfall has left reservoirs throughout Marin County at historically-low levels. The Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District urges you to visit the websites below to find water conservation tips and drought information:

[marinwater.org/conserve](http://marinwater.org/conserve)  
[nmwd.com/save-water](http://nmwd.com/save-water)  
[savingwaterpartnership.org](http://savingwaterpartnership.org)

## Help Prevent Costly Sewage Overflows



Courtesy of Dublin San Ramon Services District

## Reminder: Sewer Laterals are Property Owner's Responsibility

A sewer lateral is the private pipeline that runs from your home to the sewer main. When a sewer lateral backs up and overflows, it's frequently due to tree and/or large shrub roots growing into the line — they're attracted to the water and nutrients in the pipe. Unfortunately, once roots enter sewer pipes through cracks or loose joints they'll continue to grow and eventually completely block or even break that lateral line. So, 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).

**“Keep your sewer lateral in good condition to avoid sewer backups and potential spills and overflows.”**

An Overflow Protection Device, also called a Backflow Prevention Device, on your lateral (as shown in the diagram above) is an important protection against sewage potentially backing up into

your home or business. If there is a clog or backup, this device can prevent sewage from entering your home or business and reroute the spill to outside your building. If you haven't already done so, you may want to have one installed to avoid smelly and costly sewage overflow clean-ups in your home. They are available at plumbing supply stores, and it's recommended that a licensed plumber install the device since elevation and location are critical to its proper operation.

Remember, it's the property owner's responsibility to keep the sewer lateral in good condition, to avoid sewer backups and potential spills and overflows.

We know that repairing damage to a lateral can be very expensive for homeowners. 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 (visit [www.lgvsd.org](http://www.lgvsd.org) – click on Sewer Lateral Assistance Program). You can take advantage of this program to help make sure you're doing your part to prevent overflows or backups into your home.

## District Honored for Helping Monitor COVID in Wastewater

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District and other wastewater agencies were contacted by university researchers, including those from UC Berkeley and Stanford, asking for assistance in their work to detect COVID-19 in wastewater. The District began collecting and providing wastewater samples to researchers, leveraging the science of wastewater. This kind of early detection tool gave health authorities important data to help identify virus “hot spots” early and was of great benefit to the public.



Last fall, the District and other participating agencies were honored in a formal Resolution of the California State Water Resources Control Board, recognizing wastewater treatment utilities' voluntary contributions to monitoring for COVID-19 in wastewater. This Resolution noted the District as being among the “early trendsetters in implementing wastewater-based epidemiology prior to the formal development of State and Federal programs...” The Resolution goes on to express the Water Board's “profound appreciation” for the District's voluntary efforts and expenditures, and its contributions to the development and implementation of wastewater monitoring to inform responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and protect the health of Californians.

Visit [coronavirus.marinhhs.org/](http://coronavirus.marinhhs.org/) surveillance to see local results of the wastewater monitoring program.

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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:** Chris DeGabriele, Interim General Manager

The District received the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting for the Year ending June 30, 2020.

 Printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks.

*"Zero Waste" continued from page 2*

Composting produces far less greenhouse gas than putting food waste in the landfill, and reduces the need for water, pesticides, and fertilizers when applied to farms or your home garden.

SB 1383 also requires all businesses in California to separate organics from garbage. As part of the law, businesses that sell or distribute food may be required to donate excess edible food. Like your home food scrap recycling, these are important waste-reduction measures.

Zero Waste Marin, comprised of the cities and towns in Marin County, is a joint powers authority that helps residents and businesses meet Marin County's Zero Waste goals by 2025, by reducing and recycling their solid waste and safely disposing of hazardous materials. Everyone is encouraged to visit [zerowastemarin.org](http://zerowastemarin.org) and [marinsanitaryservice.com](http://marinsanitaryservice.com). There, you can find tools, tips, and resources to help you, your family, and your business avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and be on your way to zero waste!



## Sharing the Trails at District's Reclamation Area

Just past the District's Treatment Plant at the end of Smith Ranch Road is a 383-acre reclamation area which includes 200 acres of pasture irrigation fields, two treated wastewater storage ponds, a wildlife pond, and four miles of public trails.

A variety of visitors come to enjoy this wonderful destination, every day — families with kids, bird and wildlife watchers, bicyclists, and hikers. With these different uses, it's important to be considerate and appropriately share the trail with others. Everyone is there to get fresh air and enjoy nature, the outdoors, abundant wildlife, and views of San Pablo Bay and its surrounding hills and wetlands.

Please be respectful of other trail users, politely announce

your presence if approaching others from behind, and give consideration to slower-moving trail users. Your trail courtesy will help ensure a pleasant, safe visit for all trail users!

**Reminder:** For groups of 20 or more persons, including bicyclists or hikers, a Short-Term Use Permit is required, **in advance**. Additionally, an advance permit is required for any scientific and/or educational collection, commercial photography or filming, commercial activities, and other events or activities in sensitive areas. This requirement helps us to avoid over-crowding and protect sensitive areas within the reclamation area. Please visit [lgvsd.org/facilities/reclamation](http://lgvsd.org/facilities/reclamation) for more information and the permit application.