



Spring 2008 Newsletter

Sanitary District #5 of Marin is engaged in important new capital projects, continues to meet or exceed all regulatory standards, and is ensuring the long-term vision of the District through its ten-year strategic plan. Sanitary District #5 constantly upgrades infrastructure, looking at new ways to reduce waste, treat water, reduce energy costs, educate citizens and manage effectively.

Here are some recent developments:

Ten Year Capital Improvement Plan

The District currently maintains a main treatment facility just east of downtown Tiburon, a smaller facility on the north side of the Tiburon peninsula, as well as twenty-two pumping stations and miles of sewer lines.

The District has a ten year plan to rehabilitate or replace aging components of its wastewater treatment infrastructure. Some of the more significant steps taken to date include:

- **New emergency radios** – Late last year the District replaced the radios that enable the pumping stations to communicate with the operator's console at the main facility. The radios alert the operator to various conditions that may indicate a problem at a pumping station such as a power failure or abnormally high levels in the pumping basin. The previous radios had experience increasing occurrences of false alarms wasting District staff's time and resources in the process of investigating them.
- **New self-contained treatment plant for Paradise Cove** – Paradise Cove's new self-contained wastewater treatment plant is slated for delivery and installation in June and will replace an existing plant that is currently twenty years older than it's projected twenty year service life. The new 'plant' is actually two plants that will operate in tandem, increasing capacity, reducing the load on any single plant and also facilitating regular preventative maintenance. One plant can stay on-line while the other is undergoing maintenance.

Kudos to the District's staff for keeping the existing Paradise Cove plant operational and incident-free for over forty years!

The engineering firm responsible for installation of the new plant had planned to use a helicopter to deliver the equipment, but the District Manager convinced them that he could have it delivered by barge at significantly less expense and without the



disturbance to the neighborhood that the helicopters would have created. This saved the District between \$60,000 and \$80,000.

- **Pipeline repair** – To date the District has video-taped the interior of approximately 95% of the sewer pipelines within the District. In many cases the videos show cracks in the pipes as well as intrusion of roots into the cracks and into the pipe joints. The replacement of entire lengths of sewer pipeline is costly and frequently requires road closures and excavation, but it is not always cost effective or necessary to replace the entire length of pipe simply to prevent intrusion of rainwater into the collection system. Spot repair is sometimes a better alternative. It involves the insertion of a flexible fiberglass sleeve into an existing pipe. The fiberglass sleeve is then inflated with steam and allowed to harden, forming a new watertight pipe within the existing pipeline. This technique is significantly less expensive and less disruptive than entire pipeline replacement; and the repair is usually completed much more rapidly. To date, 12,000 feet of District pipeline has been repaired using this method.

New service for Paradise Drive residents

The expanded capacity of the new Paradise Cove treatment facilities arrives just in time to serve the 63 homes (currently on private septic systems) that are expected to take advantage of a new sewer line recently completed along Paradise Drive. The effort spearheaded by local contractor and Paradise Drive resident, Mark Jansheski, was no small undertaking. Prior to commencing the construction aspects of the project he had to overcome significant bureaucratic and legal hurdles because the homes the pipeline will serve were not part of the Town of Tiburon and did not fall within Sanitary District #5's "sphere of influence."

Water recycling

Sanitary District #5 is exploring opportunities for recycling wastewater. The issue is complex and expensive, but it is being studied. Today, The District lacks a storage facility or the property to build one, and the geography of the District presents particular challenges. The District will work carefully with partners, vendors, and the community to build a water recycling program to meet the unique needs of our community.

Storm Preparedness

During wet weather, rain water enters the wastewater collection system through cracks in aging terra cotta pipes installed in the 1940s and 50s. Plant roots seeking moisture, enter and enlarge the cracks increasing the intrusion of rain water into the collection



system. During dry weather the District's facilities process an average 750,000 gallons of wastewater per day. During extremely wet weather Sanitary District #5 may treat as much as 3,000,000 gallons per day.

To ensure the District is prepared to meet the special challenges posed by extended periods of wet weather, the District's treatment facilities are staffed 24 hours a day by a minimum of two staff for the duration of the inclement weather, with other staff on stand-by.

Pharmaceutical take-back program

[Prescription drugs](#) flushed down the toilet and [other chemicals](#) introduced into the Bay Area's wastewater collection systems have been detected in the Bay's estuaries and marine life. Since wastewater treatment plants are generally not equipped to detect or remove the evolving collection of ingredients in this chemical cocktail, it makes more sense to treat the source if possible, rather than to deal with expensive downstream problems.

The District is currently working on a pharmaceutical take-back program with the Public Education Committee. This Committee has a representative from five local sanitation agencies. These agencies include CMSA (Central Marin Sanitation Agency, LGVSD (Las Galinas Valley Sanitary District), NSD (Novato Sanitary District), SASM (Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin) and ourselves SD#5 (Sanitary District No.5 of Marin County). Once the take-back program is completed, we will post information on our website providing information on where and how to dispose of pharmaceutical products. In the mean time the District recommends you dispose of pharmaceutical products by disposing of the waste in household trash:

Keep products in their original containers – Pharmaceutical container caps are typically watertight and child proof.

Solid drugs – Add a small amount of water to a solid drug before recapping to discourage any unintended use of the drug.

Liquid drugs – Add a small amount of some absorbent material such as kitty litter, sawdust or flour, to liquid drugs before recapping to discourage any unintended use of the drug.

Double seal the container – in another container or heavy bag to prevent easy identification of the drug container or to prevent a glass container from breaking.

To reduce the amount of waste pharmaceuticals and personal care products:



Only purchase what you need – Why waste money on pharmaceuticals to just sit on the shelf and expire over time?

Say "No" to samples – If you are not going to use them, you will only need to dispose of them later.

Stop junk mail – Take your name off mailing lists so you don't receive free sample products, such as pain relievers, lotions, and shampoos. If you don't use them, then you will need to dispose of them later.

Centralize all pharmaceuticals in one location – This may help to limit over purchasing of products you already have.

Read the label – Some products contain mercury-added preservatives; if you see it on the label, find an alternative product.