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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Ross Valley Sanitary District Continues Healthy Waterways Study with Wet-Weather Bacteria Testing in Local Creeks**

**Ross Valley, October 17, 2011.** Ross Valley Sanitary District, the 111-year-old sewer agency serving the Ross Valley, is continuing its Healthy Waterways Study that began in 2009 to monitor the presence of bacteria in the Corte Madera Creek Watershed. The sampling and analysis of creek water, which is being conducted by West Yost Associates, began earlier this month and will continue for the next four weeks at five locations in the Ross Valley.

The previous and most recent test results concluded that the seasons play a role in the presence of harmful bacteria in our creeks. The “dry season” testing, which was conducted in September and October of 2010, indicated that the creeks in the watershed are not consistently contaminated with bacteria of human origin. The “wet season” testing, which was conducted in October and November of 2010, showed that a majority of samples tested positive for human Bacteroides.

“The testing is important to help establish long-term trends in the health of the watershed,” says Sandy Goldman, President of Friends of Corte Madera Creek Watershed.

She believes seasonal differences are likely related to two sources. First, the high water table during the winter provides a pathway for leaks from public and private sewer pipes to reach the creeks. Second, surface contamination is washed into the creeks through storm drains.

Goldman points out that while drawing conclusions about sources from water quality testing results is challenging, we can use the data to assess the impact of repairs to public and private sewer pipes.

“Tests for E.coli quantify the contamination in the creeks and Bacteroides testing helps us determine if bacteria are from humans, wildlife or pets,” she says.

“Protecting our watershed requires the participation of the entire community,” says Randell Ishii, District Engineer of Ross Valley Sanitary District. “Given our aging system, leaks in public and private sewer pipes are contributing to bacteria in the watershed. If we want clean water, both pipes must be fixed.”

## Additional Information



Andy Yang, Engineer for West Yost Associates, takes a wet-weather water sample from Sleepy Hollow Creek near Drake High School

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