

General Manager's Monthly Bulletin

October 2019

Ross Valley Sanitary District provides this monthly news bulletin of current notable activity and events to stay connected to the community we serve. We welcome your feedback on any information in the bulletin and if at any time you no longer prefer to receive this information, simply unsubscribe using the link below.

For more information, visit www.RVSD.org.

Construction at RVSD is winding down as we approach the wet season.

We recently finished work on sewer rehabilitation projects in [Fairfax](#), [Larkspur](#) and [San Anselmo](#) and improvements to the [Kentfield Pump Station 15](#) are almost complete.



The Butterfield Road portion of our [Butterfield/Meadowcroft-Arroyo](#) sewer improvements in San Anselmo is complete. Paving on Willow Way and concrete restoration on Meadowcroft Drive is anticipated to be complete in early November. Sewer improvements on [Lower Shady Lane/Poplar Avenue](#) are nearly complete, in time for the annual Halloween Parade.

[Click here](#) to view our interactive map with details about work in your neighborhood or on streets of interest. You can also visit the [Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\)](#) page on our website.

Cleanup at our [Larkspur Landing site](#) is three-fourths complete, with all of the hazardous material now removed from the site. We have back-filled the excavated areas and are placing topsoil and hydro seeding for the winter, with plans to wrap up before Thanksgiving. The remaining one-fourth of the project is scheduled to be complete by summer 2020.

On [October 16](#), the RVSD Board of Directors adopted Resolution No.19-1566 requesting the [Local Agency Formation Commission](#) (LAFCo) initiate proceedings to annex the Murray Park Sewer Maintenance District (a "dependent" special district under the County) into RVSD, which would become effective on July 1, 2020 according to LAFCo's schedule.

At this hearing, the board also adopted Ordinance No. 91, the new Ordinance relating to Sewer Capacity Charges and Sewer Permit Fees. The capacity charges are based on

an updated valuation of the wastewater collection system as documented by the District's modernized asset management system. The permit fees are based on the cost of staff time to administer the programs. The new Ordinance repeals [Ordinance 90](#), adopted on February 21, 2018.

Steve Moore, General Manager

Backup Power and the PG&E Planned Power Outage

By Steve Moore and Noel Sandoval

During the recent PG&E power outage, Marin County residents were reminded of our dependency on a reliable power supply. After two or three days, we all found ways to "work around" not having electricity, requiring both preparation and responsiveness that became more challenging as the hours went by. Backup power is a way of life for wastewater collection and treatment systems. Our pumps must operate continuously to transport wastewater through Ross Valley to reach the treatment plant - and we too were tested by the duration of the outage.

Typical outages we experience last an hour or less, usually 15-30 min. The longest outage we've had in recent years lasted around four hours. This recent outage was in place for approximately 45 hours (8:30 pm Saturday to 6:00 pm Monday). Seven of our 19 pump stations have generators that automatically activate and power the pumps. Our 12 smaller lift stations require a few hours to check, switch on a portable generator and pump down, about twice a day. The City of Larkspur owns one of these generators and RVSD provides the fuel. Most of the generators have a diesel fuel tank that we ensured were "full" before the power outage. All were over half-full at the end.



Greenbrae Pump Station 13 Generator

These generators are combustion engines like those found in vehicles. Using this analogy, our regular use of them is roughly equivalent to a driver's commute time of about a half-hour - a typical length of time when we test them once per month, or during a short power outage. The recent extended outage can be compared to driving to the Empire State Building in New York City.

To return home, you would likely want to check the fuel, oil and coolant, etc. before hitting the road. Similarly, we checked our backup electrical and mechanical systems after the recent outage. While some maintenance issues were identified, nothing major was found.

Flows are lower during power outages because some sources of wastewater (such as washing machines, dishwashers and about half of all hot water heaters) are electricity-driven. With these electrical appliances out of operation, the wastewater flow is reduced to about half the normal flow, resulting in less fuel use and more time allowed between pump-downs at small lift stations.

We get calls from some residents and businesses (with sewer ejector pumps) that forget about them until the power is out for a while. RVSD does not provide pumping service for private sewer ejector pumps. This type of equipment is used in buildings where plumbing fixtures have been installed below the elevation of the public

sewer main. For residents or businesses with these devices where there is no backup power, contact information should be kept handy for a plumber or someone else you can call for assistance when the next power outage (planned or not) occurs.

We were well prepared for this planned event and are fine-tuning our operations for the next power outage, planned or unplanned. Communications with our JPA partners (San Rafael, Corte Madera and CMSA) went well throughout this event and contingency plans for refueling our generators were in place if the outage had continued longer. We also provided "mutual aid" assistance of personnel and equipment to Tamalpais Community Services District in Mill Valley. In Southern Marin the outage lasted for 71 hours (nearly 3 days). We most likely would have weathered that amount of time as well (equal to driving to Atlanta and back) which would take its toll on any engine.

In Marin County we were all reminded of our dependency on electric power and devised ways to get our critical work done without it, though it got harder as the days went by. This recent event is a timely reminder to think about how much we depend on water and sewer services. You've probably thought about how many days you could live in your home without access to water. Have you thought about the same scenario without access to your sewer? You can stock up on water to a point, but you can't stock up on access to your sewer. Hence making backup power available during events such as this is a way of life for RVSD.

RVSD Reminders

[Click here](#) to review our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that explain sewer overflows and what to do.

Call the RVSD Emergency Line 24/7 at 415-259-2949 if you have a public sewer emergency, such as a manhole overflow, leaking pipe, smell odors, or see sewage on the ground. Emergency crews are available 365 days of the year, 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.

Before you hire a plumbing contractor, [click here](#) to check the California Department of Consumer Affairs Contractors State License Board (CSLB) for more information. Make sure any plumber you hire is familiar with district policies and programs for any private property sewer emergency.

All of this information can be viewed online [here](#) or by clicking "EMERGENCY" on our website [homepage](#).

RVSD CIP Construction Updates - RVSD Capital Improvement Program (CIP) construction projects to rehabilitate underground sewer pipes and associated structures throughout our service area are taking place now.

These sewer line repairs and rehabilitation projects are critical to protect public health and the environment by reducing the risk of sewer overflows.



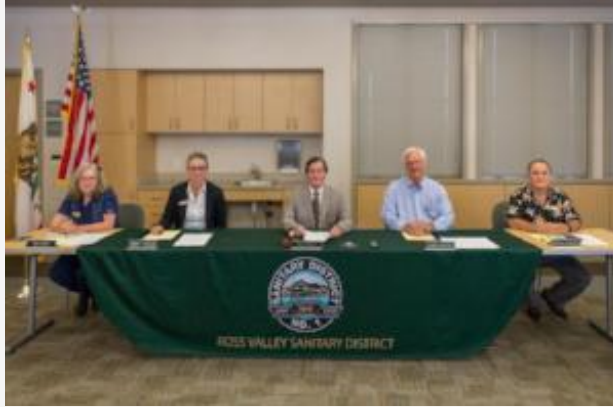
Look for construction projects taking place near you. Click on each of the CIP construction projects listed below for the latest project information and updates.

1. [Fairfax, Larkspur, San Anselmo Sewer Projects](#)
2. [Kentfield Pump Station 15 Improvements](#)
3. [Lower Shady Lane / Poplar Avenue Sewer Improvements](#)

4. [San Anselmo Sewer Improvements - Butterfield](#)

Want to receive timely construction updates? [Click here](#) to select the project you want updates for or call us at 415-259-2949.

RVSD appreciates your patience during construction as we fulfill our commitment to making strategic long-term infrastructure improvements.



Next Board Meeting: Ross Valley Sanitary District Board Meetings are typically held the third Wednesday of each month at 5pm at the Central Marin Police Authority's Community Room, located at 250 Doherty Drive in Larkspur.

The next Regular Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 20, 2019, at 5pm in Larkspur.

[Check the agenda posting here](#) 72 hours before each meeting for open session time.

Want an alert when the next Board meeting agenda is available? Please write to our [Clerk of the Board](#) to request to be included in upcoming agenda alerts.

[Click here to visit RVSD.org](#)