

BCPUD PIPELINE



Winter 2017-18

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The “D” Word – Are We Facing Another Drought?

At the close of 2017, the sun had been shining during all of December in Bolinas and we were hearing The Question: How is the water supply? In terms of rainfall, we received 4.6 inches of rain between July 1 and December 31, 2017, as compared to 11.3 inches for the same period last year. A worrisome corollary is our consumption data: across the district, consumption is up significantly since the quarter ending in August 2017. While not surprising (dry weather conditions tend to prompt increased water use, particularly for landscape irrigation), it is an unwelcome trend and one we would like to reverse as soon as possible, notwithstanding the healthy rains we received last year and those yet to come this rain year. January 2018 has started off a bit better, so we're optimistic, but please keep in mind that Bolinas has an extremely limited water supply that is very responsive to current weather conditions and do your best to conserve water.

Thank you!

**Water or Sewer
emergency?
Please contact our
office at
415-868-1224**

FOG: Fats, Oils and Grease, A Cautionary Tale

Early on a Sunday morning in December 2017, when BCPUD staff arrived downtown to perform the daily check of the sewer system lift station operations, something seemed amiss. The pumps that convey the wastewater collected at the lift station via gravity flows from downtown and the Little Mesa up through the force main to the treatment ponds on the Bolinas Mesa were off and there was no indication of any flows for many hours. Staff suspected a potential pump malfunction and made some adjustments, but soon realized that there was a different problem: wastewater was not flowing into the lift station wetwell at all, which indicated a major blockage in the collection system. Staff quickly pulled the lid off the manhole located directly outside the lift station in Wharf Road and suspicions were confirmed: wastewater was backing up in the collection system and rising – the level was inches below the lid, threatening to overflow and cause a “sewer spill” on the public street. There was a complete blockage of the line connecting the manhole to the lift station wetwell, preventing collected wastewater from entering the wetwell. Working quickly, staff called additional personnel and equipment to the site and managed to dislodge a significant blockage of “FOG” – fats, oils and grease – that had accumulated and congealed into an almost intractable mass in the collection main. Thanks to the staff’s fast thinking and good work, a sewer spill was averted and the normal operations were resumed with no significant consequence to the community.

Fats, oils and grease are naturally produced during cooking and baking. Common sources include: meat fats, lard, shortening, butter, margarine, food scraps, baked goods and pastries, cream-based sauces and cooking oil. **PLEASE, do not put any of these items down your drain!** FOG can cause many problems if allowed to go down the drain and into the sewer pipes (or into your septic system!). Liquefied grease and fat from animal products will solidify and clog pipes, or coat pipes and contribute to blockages. Blockages may cause a back-up into your home or trigger an overflow or back-up of sewage into the streets or ocean, creating public health and environmental risks.



Here are some tips to reduce or eliminate FOG suggested by other wastewater agencies around the country:

- ✓ Pour all cooled cooking fats, oils and grease that will harden (bacon grease, meat drippings) into a waxed food container such as a milk carton or container with a lid and dispose of it in the garbage or your kitchen scrap recycling.
- ✓ Mix small amounts of liquid grease into your kitchen scrap recycling (where available) or place in a lidded container with an absorbent material such as cat litter, and dispose of in the garbage.
- ✓ Wipe down greasy pots, pans or dishes with a paper towel or newspaper before washing. Dispose of paper in the garbage or your kitchen scrap recycling (where available).
- ✓ Scrape greasy food scraps from pots, pans, and dishes into the garbage or kitchen scrap recycling (where available), not a garbage disposal.
- ✓ Do not wash grease down the drain or garbage disposal.

There's A New Garbage Company in Town!

Effective December 23, 2017, Recology Sonoma Marin is the new garbage franchisee operating in Bolinas. Recology purchased substantially all of the assets of The Ratto Group d/b/a Redwood Empire Disposal Company and has taken over the contractual obligations of that company for solid waste, green waste and recycling services in Bolinas. As presented to the BCPUD Board of Directors at its regularly scheduled meeting on September 20, 2017, Recology representatives underscored the company's commitment to honor all terms of the franchise agreement with the district and to retain as many of the existing drivers as possible. Any questions about your garbage service should be directed to the new company by calling the office toll-free at 1-800-243-0291.

