



UPCOMING FREE EVENTS:

Check our next edition of the Mt. View Monitor for free events coming up in Spring of 2015!

UPCOMING BOARD MEETING DATES

MVSD Board of Directors meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at the District office at 3800 Arthur Road and are open to the public.

Thursday, December 11, 2014, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, January 8, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 12, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Mt. View Sanitary District was formed in 1923. That's more than 90 years of protecting health and the environment through wastewater services to the Martinez area!



Get to Know the Black Phoebe

The Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) is a member of the tyrant flycatcher family. Commonly found near water sources such as streams, wetlands, ponds, and even livestock troughs, it is a year-round resident in California. This lovely song bird sports a charcoal grey body with a crisp white belly, making it easy to identify and a favorite among beginner birders.

In Moorhen and McNabney marshes, look for it sitting in the open on sturdy marsh vegetation, or a low tree branch or fence post, as it scans for prey. Phoebes dart out from these perches with short bursts of flight to catch their meals on-the-wing. While perched, they pump their tails with abandon, a behavior that can also aid in identification. Phoebes are solitary nesters, often remaining in an established territory for many years, providing enjoyment for both devoted and casual birders alike.

Keep FOG Out This Holiday Season

This holiday season, you will likely be enjoying some delicious food. What do you do with this food once you and your family can't take another bite? It may be tempting to wash leftovers down the drain. However, this can cause problems for your sewer system. Much of the food we enjoy around the holidays—think turkey, ham and gravy—are loaded with fats, oils and grease or FOG.

When poured down the drain as a liquid or in the form of food scraps, this FOG quickly hardens in pipes, causing blockages. Just because you run hot water or the garbage disposal, this does not mean that the FOG will dissolve. As FOG continues to build up over time, it causes the capacity of sewer pipes to decrease. Eventually, this can lead to a complete pipe blockage.

A blocked pipe can lead to a waste water overflow, which can be bad for your personal property, the environment and your wastewater system. FOG backups in the home may cause damage to your home and/or possessions. It may make your home temporarily unlivable and repairs can be very costly. Additionally, these overflows when they occur near storm drain systems can cause untreated wastewater to enter creeks and rivers, creating a potential health hazard to humans and wildlife. FOG backups are also costly for MVSD in terms of clean up and pipe replacements. We work diligently to keep your rates low, but unfortunately, continual problems with FOG backups could necessitate rate increases in order to cover the cost of the repairs.

So what should you do with your leftover FOG this holiday season? Leftover FOG should always go in the trash instead

Help Us Keep Drugs Out of the Drains!

Like many people, you may have expired and/or unwanted medicine at your home. Do you know how to properly dispose of these items? We ask that you do not flush them down the toilet, pour them down the drain, or throw them in the garbage. You may have been told in the past to use one of these methods for disposal, but these methods are now considered outdated. They should be taken to your local designated pharmaceutical disposal location.

Scientific studies show the chemicals in many drugs can harm aquatic life. Research has linked pharmaceutical pollutants to reproductive defects in fish, resistance to antibiotics in humans and the development of drug-resistant germs. Wastewater treatment facilities are not equipped to remove all traces of pharmaceutical

of down the drain. If you have leftover drippings from meats such as turkey or ham, first allow them to cool completely in a safe



place. The remnants will harden, and you can scrape them from the pan into another container like a Ziploc bag or empty jar and toss the leftovers in the trash.

If you plan on frying any holiday treats, make sure you also properly dispose of your used oil. Allow the oil to cool and pour into a disposable container like a bottle, milk jug, or a jar. Wipe remaining FOG from pots and pans with a paper towel before washing.

Remember, it's not just oils and meat drippings that contain FOG. There are many other hidden sources of FOG including creamy sauces and dressings and sour cream. These should be disposed of in the same way.

We hope you and your family have a joyful holiday season. We appreciate your help in preventing FOG build ups and FOG-related overflows this holiday season.

chemicals. If you flush your drugs, a portion of those contaminants will reach local waters. All in all, flushing drugs down the toilet is the least desirable of all disposal alternatives.

We want it to be easy for you to get rid of these items in a way that is safe for both you and the environment. There are three locations in Martinez where you can drop off pharmaceuticals free of charge. They include the Contra Costa Sheriffs field office building, the Contra Costa County Hospital and the City of Martinez Police Department. For the complete list of nine Contra Costa County locations please visit <http://www.mvsd.org/programs/pollution-prevention/>.

At MVSD, we are proud to participate in the statewide campaign calling for "No Drugs

(continued from front)

Down the Drain.” Both over-the-counter and prescription pharmaceuticals cause significant pollution in our waterways. It can be harmful to both wildlife and to humans.

Before arriving at the drop off site, pour unwanted pills into a quart-size sealable plastic bag and recycle the empty plastic containers. All liquid medications should be left in the original bottles but also put into a sealed plastic bag to prevent leakage. At the site, look for the clearly marked green collection box.

We appreciate your support in helping us to prevent the pollution caused by improper disposal of medications! It is the combined efforts of all of our customers that make a difference!

Challenges in Marsh Management

MVSD’s treated wastewater, called effluent, creates and maintains a vital aquatic habitat within our marshes. MVSD releases effluent into two marshes, the Moorhen Marsh which is located next to the treatment plant and McNabney Marsh, which is located next to I-680 and Waterfront Road. Over the past 5 years, McNabney Marsh has begun the transition from an effluent only marsh to a more natural tidally influenced brackish marsh. Accomplishing this transition requires coordination with the operation of a tide gate located on Peyton Slough. The tide gates allow seawater up Peyton Slough and into McNabney Marsh during high tides and to promote drainage of McNabney Marsh during low tides.

While this effort is very important on an environmental level, it also comes with a series of challenges. These challenges have been the result of a number of unanticipated issues. One unanticipated issue recently addressed was the objectionable odors associated with decaying plant material that is present in the marsh muds.

During September and October, the Vine Hill neighborhood adjacent to McNabney Marsh, experienced strong odors from this decaying plant material. These odors were caused when water levels were lowered and large expanses of marsh muds were exposed for several days. A project in a marsh on the other side of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks required the tide gate to be closed, consequently lowering the water levels.



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Maintaining McNabney Marsh and its diverse plant and wildlife species is a high priority for MVSD.

Once aware of the odors, MVSD and the tide gate operator worked hard to raise the water level in McNabney Marsh to cover the exposed muds and limit the odor problem. Careful manipulation of the tide gate on Peyton Slough, as well as channel gates located in McNabney Marsh to coincide with the tidal cycle in Carquinez Strait, captured as much water in McNabney Marsh as possible without overtopping Peyton Slough and inundating the construction site. The project was completed on October 1, 2014 and the tide gate was opened and water levels in McNabney rose, covering the offending muds.

A tidally influenced brackish marsh, which is planned for McNabney, will naturally have routine periods of low water levels. To reduce the potential for objectionable odors in the future as the ongoing transition of McNabney occurs, MVSD staff members are currently investigating potential options.

The Mt. View Sanitary District apologizes for the inconvenience to the Vine Hill neighborhood and we thank each of you who were affected for your continued patience! We are committed to preventing these issues in the future as part of our commitment to provide our customers with high-quality service!



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Have a sewer emergency? Call (925) 228-5635