

# THE HERON

Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District

Summer 2024



## Recognizing 70 Years of Service to Marin County Residents

Did you know that the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District is actually part of the baby boomer generation? The District was “born” nearly 70 years ago in 1954, as a wastewater treatment plant built to address health problems associated with failing septic tanks in the Santa Venetia area.

So much has changed since then! Today, the District has extended its service area and improved and expanded its facilities, and continues to provide first-rate wastewater treatment services for its 30,000-plus customers. But since 1954 it has also evolved and changed with the times in other ways, now delivering a wider range of services to protect public health and the environment, engaging with the community, and ensuring compliance with stringent, ever-changing regulations.

Far beyond its start as a single-

purpose wastewater treatment facility, the District is now recognized as a significant, multi-purpose regional environmental steward, with a commitment to sustainability and efficiency.



Attribution: Jon Shokola/GallVali Davis

By utilizing its own solar power array to generate electricity, the District avoids the need to run standard power plants using fossil fuels, increasing its energy independence and avoiding additional greenhouse gas pollution.

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### What else was going on in 1954, the year the District was born?

- Actor Denzel Washington, TV show host Oprah Winfrey, comedian Jerry Seinfeld, and actor Jackie Chan were born.
- Minimum wage was 75¢ an hour, bread was 12¢ a loaf, a gallon of gas was 21¢, a movie ticket was 56¢, the average house cost was \$10,250, and the average car was \$1,700.
- Some of the popular movies were *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *On the Waterfront*, and *A Star is Born*. *From Here to Eternity* won best film at the Academy Awards.
- The Piña Colada was invented in Cuba.
- Prime time television shows included *I Love Lucy*, *The Jackie Gleason Show*, *Dragnet*, *Lassie*, and *You Bet Your Life*.
- The first Burger King opened in Miami, FL.
- The New York Giants won the World Series.

## Design Underway for Multipurpose Facility

### Building will Function as Laboratory, Board Room, and Public Education Building

The Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District has taken a significant step forward in enhancing its environmental and community services by awarding an architectural design contract to Noll & Tam Architects for a new Multipurpose Laboratory Building.

When completed, this facility will house not only the District's laboratory — a state-of-the-art science center which is key to compliance with rigorous state and federal water quality regulations — but also the District Board of Directors' meeting room and space for community engagement and education.

The laboratory will be located on the building's first floor. On the second floor, the education center and boardroom will serve as a location for Board meetings, as well as public outreach, hands-on learning, and community meetings. This space is designed to foster interaction and education about wastewater treatment, recycling, and conservation efforts, highlighting the District's role in these critical environmental initiatives.

*Continued on page 4...*

The District also produces biogas (renewable natural gas) generated through the anaerobic digestion process at the wastewater treatment plant, and uses it to generate clean power. Less use of standard power grid energy and commercial fuel means less use of non-renewable fossil fuels — that's a great thing for the environment, and for all of us.

With the 2023 completion of the Secondary Treatment Plant Upgrade and Recycled Water Expansion Project, the District's wastewater treatment capacity has more than doubled (to 18 million gallons per day), helping protect the environment by reducing the potential for overflows during storm events. Its production capacity of recycled water for non-potable uses has more than tripled (to five million gallons per day), which is distributed to Marin Water and North Marin Water District for use in irrigation, car washes, cooling towers, toilet flushing, and other non-potable needs that might otherwise require use of drinking water.

A reclamation area is part of the District's operation, with a 20-acre wildlife marsh, 40 acres of storage ponds, a 10-acre saltwater marsh, 20 acres of irrigated landscaping, and 200 acres of irrigated pasture. The site and its public trails, including a portion of the San

Francisco Bay Trail, is a favorite destination for bird watchers, walkers, and nature lovers, and provides habitat for a variety of wildlife.

The District re-uses biosolids — a byproduct of the wastewater treatment process — spreading them onto a dedicated nine-acre area on District property where they become part of the soil. While this is an approved method of disposing of biosolids, the District's goal is to treat them as a resource, not as a disposal issue, and is exploring ways to beneficially use the nutrient value of biosolids.



*Recycled Water Distribution Pump Station*

To function most effectively and productively in the 21st century, it's crucial to ensure collaboration and coordination among agencies on a local and regional basis — this is especially true in the sensitive Baylands areas. The District has developed partnerships and affiliations with a variety of agencies, all with the common

goal of serving the community in an environmentally sensitive, sustainable, and forward-thinking way: Marin Water, North Marin Water District, Marin Sanitary Service, North Bay Watershed Association, Marin/Sonoma Vector and Mosquito Control District, Zero Waste Marin, and North Bay Water Reuse Authority, among others. The District also has a valued association with the Marin County Local Agency Formation Commission, an agency that promotes and coordinates the efficient delivery of local government services and encourages the preservation of open space and agricultural lands.

Be sure to visit the District's website for more details about how the District has evolved from a single-purpose wastewater treatment facility in 1954, to today's multi-purpose, forward-thinking entity. Learn more at [LGVSD.org/70-years-proud](http://LGVSD.org/70-years-proud)

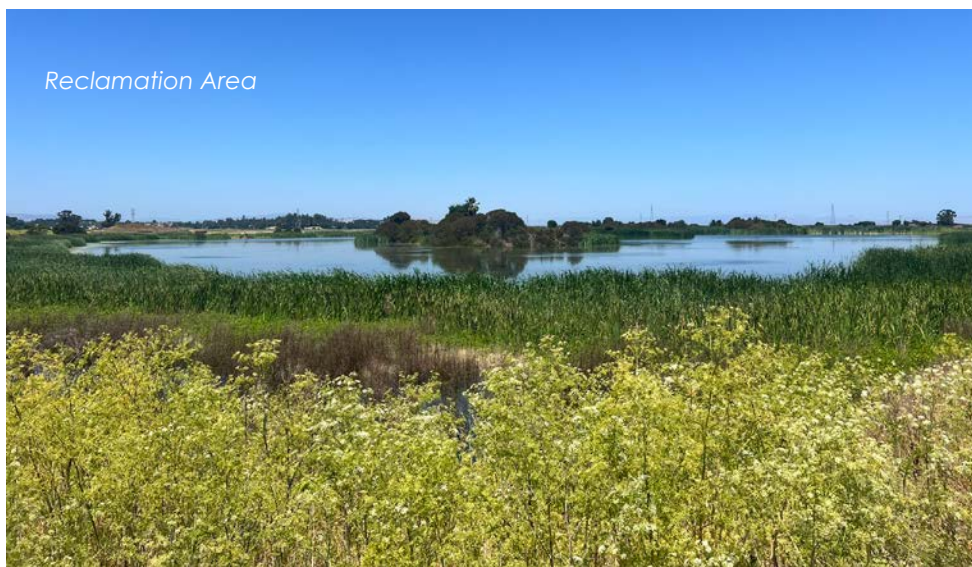
### Check out our new website and subscribe to email updates!

Our new website went live last year, and we're excited for you to take a look.

[www.LGVSD.org](http://www.LGVSD.org)

The site is filled with interesting information for you to discover, including more details about many of the topics mentioned in this article.

When you go to the website, be sure to sign up for the District's email list. You can subscribe to receive timely news and updates, links to our newsletters, or agendas for our Board of Directors' meetings. Here's a direct link to subscribe to your selected District emails:



*Reclamation Area*



LGVSD laboratory worker performing pH testing.

## Join the Leading Edge of Public and Environmental Health: Wastewater Management

The sustained, effective operation of wastewater management is critical to public health and to the protection of our environment. The essential role wastewater professionals play continues non-stop regardless of the emergencies around us, whether fires, power outages, other disasters, or even a pandemic — and the many career opportunities for skilled wastewater treatment plant operators continue to grow.

This is an exciting, expanding, and important field of work which is experiencing an industry-wide demand for skilled treatment plant technicians. These professionals perform a variety of operational, mechanical, and electrical tasks to ensure the wastewater treatment plant and associated facilities are operated and maintained at their peak performance levels.

Throughout the industry, these are well-paid jobs, many of which require various levels of certification. Training is available through trade schools, local colleges, and universities throughout the state and country. Scan the QR codes at right to see the wastewater and instrumentation programs offered by Solano Community College, Santa Rosa Junior College, and

the State Water Resources Control Board. Or, explore career paths with Baywork ([baywork.org](http://baywork.org)) a network of water and wastewater agencies focused on workforce reliability.

As populations grow and environmental regulations continue to evolve and expand, more water- and wastewater-treatment services — including the production of recycled water — will be needed for the communities they protect. New treatment plants, along with expansion of existing plants, are anticipated to continue to create jobs for operators, management, and environmental STEM experts.

The growing field of wastewater management has ample opportunities for advancement, personal growth, and job satisfaction, and most positions include very good benefits. It's a career opportunity worth exploring!



Solano CC



SRJC



WRCB1



WRCB2

## Barry Nitzberg Appointed to LGVSD Board of Directors



At its meeting of May 2, 2024, the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District Board of Directors selected Barry Nitzberg to fill a vacant seat on the Board, following the resignation of a Board member earlier this year. Mr. Nitzberg was sworn in at a special Board meeting on May 6, and the appointment is effective until December 2024. This seat will be up for election in November 2024 to complete the remaining two years of the term (to December 2026).

*"I'm very grateful to have been selected to serve on the Board, and I look forward to offering my skills and expertise to help this organization advance its mission,"* said Nitzberg. *"As a Board member, I know that our policy decisions are crucial to ensure the District stays on track in providing excellent wastewater treatment services and high-quality recycled water, while keeping a focus on protecting the environment."*

Nitzberg has been in the plumbing industry for many years, initially as a Journeyman Plumber with U.A. Local 38, then as a Licensed Plumbing Contractor in Marin County, followed by employment as Senior Territory Manager for plumbing products manufacturer Moen, Inc. He subsequently joined PACE Supply Corp., a wholesale supplier of plumbing, water works, wastewater, water treatment and hydronics. At PACE, an employee-owned company, Nitzberg served as a member of the Board of Directors and, until his retirement in 2015, held the position of Senior Vice President of Sales, Marketing, and Organizational Development.

Nitzberg holds a BA degree in Geography. He has been a resident

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**Board of Directors**

Megan Clark  
Craig K. Murray  
Barry Nitzberg  
Gary Robards  
Crystal J. Yezman

**Board Meetings are**

held at 4:00 PM on  
the first and third  
Thursday of each month  
at the District offices.

**ECRWSS – Postal Customer**

**District Administration:** Curtis Paxton, General Manager

The District received the following awards and certificates:

- Recycled Water Agency of the Year 2023 (Small Category) from the California WaterReuse Association
- District Transparency Certificate of Excellence by the Special District Leadership Foundation for 2022-2025 in recognition of its outstanding efforts to promote transparency and good governance.
- Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 2022 was received by Government Finance Officers Association.

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*"Design Underway for Multipurpose Facility" continued from page 1*

The project's parking lot will incorporate solar canopies and electric vehicle charging stations, reflecting the District's commitment to renewable energy and sustainability. These features, along with the building's design considerations for ADA compliance, energy efficiency, and resilience against sea level rise and storm surge, underline the project's forward-thinking approach.

The award of this contract marks the beginning of a project poised to elevate the District's wastewater treatment and recycling capabilities for its 30,000-plus customers, and enhance its interaction and engagement with the community.

Initiated in July 2023, the contract's competitive review process concluded with the selection of Noll & Tam Architects, a firm distinguished by its expertise in laboratory design. Vital to this firm's selection is its alignment with the District's values and vision. The contract encompasses

a wide-ranging scope from conceptual design to construction administration and management, demonstrating the project's ambition and scale.

With a construction budget of \$10 million, the Multipurpose Laboratory Building project is a significant investment in the District's and Marin County's future, reflecting a dedication to innovation, sustainability, and public service. The design phase is expected to span 13 months, with the project's completion targeted for June 2026.

This initiative not only promises to enhance LGVSD's operational capabilities but also sets a new standard for integrating community-focused environmental education and sustainable practices within public utilities. As this project unfolds, it provides enhanced laboratory services and represents a vital step toward a more informed, environmentally conscious, and engaged community in Marin County.

*"Barry Nitzberg" continued from page 3*

of the District's service area since 2013 and is a member of the Santa Venetia Neighborhood Association. Long a concerned environmentalist, Nitzberg co-founded a chapter of the American Cetacean Society of Marin County, for which he coordinated presentations by national and international experts on the status of whale populations, and he personally conducted an informational program on the California Grey Whale and other marine mammals.

The District's Board of Directors sets policy and makes a variety of decisions governing the District's operations of providing effective wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling services. The Board focuses on critical policy issues involving budgets and funding, operations/infrastructure, partnerships, and other vital matters which guide the overall success of the District.



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