

THE HERON

Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District

Summer 2025

Celebrate 40 Years of Trails, Ponds, Wildlife, and Views!

This year, the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District is proudly marking the 40th anniversary of opening its Reclamation Area. Since 1985, countless visitors have enjoyed this scenic and tranquil destination. Families with kids, bird and wildlife watchers, photographers, artists, bicyclists, picnickers, and hikers all seek out this much-loved destination for a nearby, easy-to-access nature experience.



The 383-acre Reclamation Area features a freshwater pond with three islands where various bird species nest, two storage ponds that hold highly treated recycled wastewater, 200 acres of pasture irrigation fields, and four miles of easy, even-ground trails for walkers and bicyclists.

Back in the early 1980s, the District was upgrading its treatment plant and faced a challenge with how to handle the increased treated wastewater discharge into Miller Creek. Instead of viewing this as a problem, the District saw an opportunity. To improve water quality entering the San Pablo Bay, a decision was made to stop the

discharge of treated wastewater into Miller Creek during the summer months and instead store the treated wastewater for other uses. Long before "water reuse" became a common term, the District chose to create a reclamation area—not just to manage wastewater, but also to support agriculture, enhance wildlife habitat, provide public access, and protect open space.

The District acquired the land (previously a hayfield occasionally used for grazing) from the Catholic Youth Organization of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. By 1985, the District had transformed it into something special—a unique space where environmental care and community connection come together, along with meeting its needs for treated wastewater disposal. The Board and staff worked with vision and heart to create a peaceful haven where people could enjoy nature up close, all while responsibly managing the land's role in wastewater treatment and recycling.

Over the years since then, the District has improved access, expanded wildlife-friendly features, and maintained its strong commitment to preserving the area's ecological integrity.

We recently asked some visitors what they love about the Reclamation Area. They shared

Continued on page 2...

Construction Beginning for Multipurpose Facility

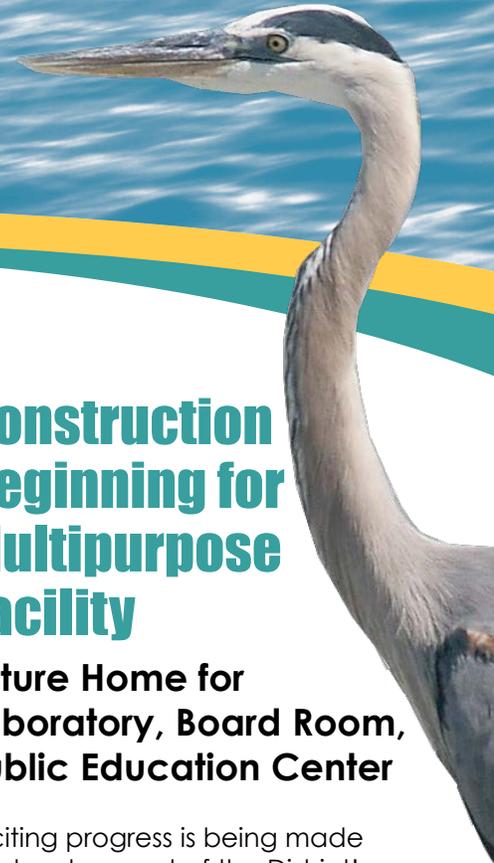
Future Home for Laboratory, Board Room, Public Education Center

Exciting progress is being made on development of the District's brand-new Multipurpose Laboratory Building, which will serve as a hub for science, sustainability, and community connection. This thoughtfully designed facility will bring together the District's state-of-the-art laboratory, boardroom, and public education center — all under one roof.

The new building will be located adjacent to site of the existing laboratory at the end of 300 Smith Ranch Road. Design is complete, and the big news is that construction will soon get underway! Work will happen in three carefully planned phases:

- Phase 1 will begin with relocating underground utilities and preparing for the foundation.
- Phase 2 focuses on building the foundation and the shell of the main structure; this phase is scheduled to be completed before winter so that wet weather will not impact the rest of the building schedule.
- Phase 3 will be full construction of the building and its interior spaces and facilities.

Continued on page 3...



Early Notice: Curbside Cleanup in September

Put this on your calendar! Marin Sanitary Service will offer its twice-yearly Residential Curbside Cleanup in the Las Gallinas area from September 1–5.



On your regular collection day that week, you can place up to **14 extra bags or cans** (that's up to two cubic yards) of garbage, recyclables, and compostables at the curb for pickup at no extra charge. This is a great opportunity to clear out clutter and get your household in order before fall.

What's not included:

- Bulky items like mattresses, appliances, or furniture
- Hazardous waste, electronics, batteries, lightbulbs, or paint
- Dirt, rocks, or construction debris

For a full list of what's accepted at Curbside Cleanup, and how to schedule bulky item pickups, visit: MarinSanitaryService.com/residential/residential-clean-ups. Learn about proper disposal of household hazardous waste at Marin Household Hazardous Waste Facility's website: marinhhw.com.

Marin Sanitary Service provides garbage, recycling, and compost collection — including this Curbside Cleanup — through a franchise agreement with Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District. They also work with the District to support California's statewide organic waste recycling and surplus food recovery programs. Questions? Visit MarinSanitaryService.com or call (415) 456-2601.

"Celebrate 40 Years" continued from page 1

enthusiastic responses, including: beautiful wildflowers, exciting wildlife (including an otter!), flocks of ducks and geese, refreshing air and exercise, and spectacular views of San Pablo Bay, Mt. Tamalpais, and the Bay wetlands.



Photo: marinmommies.com

You're invited to celebrate the Reclamation Area's 40th anniversary by visiting and discovering YOUR favorite part! After your visit, send a quick note to info@lgvsd.org and tell us what you enjoy most about this popular spot.

The four-mile trail in the Reclamation Area forms part of the San Francisco Bay Trail which, once complete, will encircle San Francisco and San Pablo Bays with a continuous

Short-Term Use Permit

Reminder: For groups of 20 or more, a Short-Term Use Permit is required, in advance. Additionally, an advance permit is required for any scientific and/or educational collection, commercial photography or filming, commercial activities, and other events or activities in sensitive areas. This requirement helps us avoid over-crowding and protect sensitive areas within the reclamation area. Visit lgvsd.org/applications-and-permits for the permit application.



Photo: JT Birds

500-mile network of bicycling and hiking trails. So far, over 350 miles have been completed (learn more at www.baytrail.org).

When you come to the Reclamation Area, it's important to be aware of the different uses on the trail — walkers, bicyclists, slower-moving children, and faster-moving joggers. Because of this blend of trail uses, we all need to be considerate and attentively share the trail:

- Always respect other trail users
- Politely announce yourself when approaching another trail user from behind
- Be mindful of people moving at a slower pace
- Dogs must be kept on-leash at all times



It's all about trail courtesy! Your consideration ensures a safe, enjoyable experience for you and other visitors. After all, everyone visiting the Reclamation Area is there for the same reason — to breathe fresh air, enjoy the outdoors, observe wildlife, and take in the views.

We expect to start using the building in summer of 2026.



Rendering of approach to new facility.

What's Inside?

The first floor will feature a modern laboratory, essential to meeting strict state and federal water quality standards. Upstairs, a dedicated space will host Board meetings and offer opportunities for learning, community events, and public outreach. This space will spotlight topics like wastewater treatment, water recycling/reuse, and conservation — all while showcasing the District's critical role in protecting our environment.

Built with Sustainability in Mind

Sustainability is at the heart of the new facility's design. The building was planned with the goal of achieving LEED Gold certification — a very high standard in green building that recognizes leadership in energy efficiency, water conservation, and

indoor air quality, among other sustainability elements. From the inside out, this facility will reflect smart, environmentally conscious choices that reduce its overall environmental impact. Outside, the parking area will feature solar canopies and EV charging stations, while the building itself will include ADA-accessible design, energy-efficient systems, and safeguards against sea level rise and storm surge. It's a forward-thinking space built for long-term resilience and environmental responsibility.

An Investment in the Future

This project represents a meaningful investment in both infrastructure and community. It's designed to enhance the District's ability to serve our more-than-30,000 customers while strengthening our community connection. The construction budget is currently estimated at \$19 million — an increase from early pre-design estimates, and reflects rising costs of materials and labor, as well as added features to support LEED certification and long-term sustainability.

Stay tuned as this exciting project unfolds! It represents not just a new building, but a new chapter — one that blends innovation, sustainability, and public service to benefit everyone in our community.



Rendering of deck area of new multipurpose facility.

Permits and Payments: Online or In Person

Permits and applications are available on the District's website at www.lgvsd.org/applications-and-permits. There, you can download an application for an inspection of your sewer lateral during a home sale or remodeling project, apply to participate in the Sewer Lateral Rehabilitation Assistance Program, initiate a permit for replacing or repairing your sewer lateral, or request increased sewer capacity. And now, you can pay any associated fees online (note that there is no charge for sewer lateral repair or replacement permits – they are free!).



You can also pick up permits or applications and make payments in person at the District's Administration Office, located at **101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300**. The office is open Monday through Thursday from 6:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The office is closed every other Friday.

Please Note: The District's wastewater treatment plant on Smith Ranch Road does not issue permits, provide engineering assistance, or offer other administrative services.

101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300, San Rafael, CA 94903
Phone (415) 472-1734 • Fax (415) 499-7715
www.lgvsd.org

Board of Directors

Megan Clark
Nicholas Lavrov
Craig K. Murray
Gary E. 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.

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 2023 from Government Finance Officers Association.

 Printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks.

Need Help with Sewer Bills? We're Here for You

We understand that bills can sometimes become overwhelming, especially for lower-income households. That's why the District is continuing its Low-Income Sewer Rate Assistance Program for fiscal year 2025–2026.



Mikhail Nilov, pexels.com

Eligible low-income, single-family households can receive a 10% discount on their sewer service

charges. If you own your home and are enrolled in the PG&E CARE Program, you likely qualify. Additional eligibility requirements apply — to learn more and get the application, visit lgvsd.org/lisrap or call 415-472-1734.



Mark your calendars today for a great opportunity to clear out household clutter this fall!

See article on page 2 for more details.

Stay in the Loop – Sign Up Is Easy!

Want to stay updated on what's happening in the District? It's easy! Just scan the QR code, and you can subscribe to get the latest news and updates, newsletters, and Board of Directors meeting agendas — all straight to your inbox. Or, you can go to lgvsd.org and click on the "Join our mailing list" tab." And don't worry, your email is safe with us. We'll never share it with anyone.



When done reading this newsletter, please put it in your blue recycling bin with other recyclable paper items.