



December 21, 2023

# Newsletter

Dear Community Members,

We hope this newsletter finds you in good spirits and health. Here's a roundup of what's been happening and what's coming up in our community wastewater sustainable solutions!

## Section 1: Community Updates

- **Community Events:** Woodacre residents were invited to participate in an exclusive tour of the Marshall Wastewater Facility. This opportunity offered residents an invaluable firsthand experience of observing the workings of a wastewater facility. The tour aimed to enhance their understanding of our ongoing project and its significance within the community.

The tour welcomed 15 Woodacre residents and we commenced at the Marshall Store. There, we engaged in a 30-minute Q&A session with a Marshall homeowner as well as the owner of the Marshall Store, delving into the history, planning process, costs, and insights from 15 years of operating the system. In attendance were Brandon Jacka from NSU (wastewater system operator), design engineers Norm Hantzsche and Matt Woll from Questa, and Arti Kundu (EHS Project Manager), providing additional information and addressing inquiries.

Following the Q&A, we proceeded to the treatment plant to observe the layout and functionality of the AdvanTex treatment system, a technology being considered for Woodacre. Subsequently, we hiked to the hilltop for an overview of the extensive hillside leachfield and automatic dosing siphon system, resembling the community leachfield under examination for Woodacre.

- **Notable Changes or Developments:** The project's duration will now extend to an additional 6 months, concluding on June 30th, 2024, rather than the initial deadline of December 31st, 2023. This extension allows the consultant ample time to thoroughly explore various alternatives for inclusion in the project report. Additionally, the county is actively exploring diverse funding sources to facilitate the transition into the project's next phase.

**Feasibility Study Updates:** In May a Wastewater Survey Questionnaire was developed and mailed by Questa to owners of the approximately 250 developed properties in Woodacre Flats and adjoining areas being studied for community wastewater improvements. The purpose of the survey was to obtain input directly from property owners about their experiences, knowledge, concerns and views on potential long-term wastewater management options for the community. The survey was voluntary and anonymous and did not require identification of property owner name or address. A total of 80 completed questionnaires were returned to Questa in May through July, a 32% response rate. A response rate of 30% to 50% is common for these types of surveys.

Local Concerns. The following summarizes the level of concerns expressed by survey participants regarding existing use and functioning of septic systems (OWTS) in Woodacre.

Issue	Level of Concern	
	Low	Medium to High
OWTS Functioning Problems		
Normal year winter operation	59%	41%

High rainfall winter operation	46%	54%
Summer operation	80%	20%
OWTS Code Compliance/Functioning Concerns		
For possible selling/refinancing	51%	48%
For house/property improvements	48%	52%
OWTS Interference with Property Uses		
For current uses	67%	33%
For planned house/property improvements	48%	52%
Public Health/Water Quality Impacts		
Contamination in yards and drainages	42%	58%
Contamination in Woodacre & San Geronimo Creeks	36%	64%
Odors and other Nuisances	50%	50%

Community Wastewater Alternatives. The following summarizes the level of interest expressed by survey participants regarding different alternative approaches for long-term wastewater management in Woodacre.

Alternative	Preference	
	Percentage First Choice	Overall Ranked Preference
No Project (Status Quo)	17%	6th
Onsite Wastewater Management Program	15%	5th
Septic Tanks w/Community Leachfield	15%	4th
Secondary Treatment w/Community Leachfield	21%	3rd
Secondary Treatment w/Winter Leachfield, Summer Irrigation	20%	1st
Tertiary Treatment w/Winter Leachfield, Water Recycling Uses	52%	2nd

Other Comments. Other comments about the survey, concerns and community alternatives made by survey participants included the following:

- The questionnaire was too technical; more information is needed.
- Concerns about cost impacts for retirees and the elderly
- Support for community system for the Flats
- Support for a larger service area, including connection to Ross Valley San. Dist.
- Allow functioning existing systems to remain.
- Separate sewage and growth issues
- Concerns about neighboring system failures and odors during winter rains
- Current County regulatory policies for septic system upgrades are ineffective.

Water Use Data. Information contained in the completed questionnaires indicated winter water use of approximately 94 gallons per day (gpd) per residence and 35 gpd per person. Water meter data provided by Marin Water District for 150 parcels in the Woodacre Flats area for the period of 2017-2022 showed average winter water usage as summarized in the table below. Winter water usage correlates most closely with wastewater flows generated by residences.

Marin Water District – Water Use Data for Woodacre Flats (gpd per connection)			
Year	Dec - Jan	Feb – Mar	Average Winter Water Use
2017-2018	124	111	118
2018-2019	129	90	110
2019-2020	158	109	134
2020-2021	127	136	132
2021-2022	98	97	98
Average	127	109	118

Section 2: Upcoming Events & Activities

- **Mark Your Calendar:** An upcoming public meeting is scheduled for March to comprehensively review the progress and provide updates on the project's developments.
- **Community Outreach:** The county and Questa will collaborate to host an informative seminar focusing on the functionality and intricacies of septic systems.

Section 3: Community Resources & Contacts

- **Useful Contacts:** Norm Hantzsche from Questa, Email: [nhantzsche@questaec.com](mailto:nhantzsche@questaec.com); Arti Kundu from EHS/CDA, [arti.kundu@marincounty.gov](mailto:arti.kundu@marincounty.gov)
- **Community Resources:** The [project website](#) is fully up to date, housing all relevant links for easy access and reference.

Wishing you all the best and Happy Holidays!

Warm regards,

Arti Kundu

Project Manager

Email: [arti.kundu@marincounty.gov](mailto:arti.kundu@marincounty.gov)