



Media Release

California Regional Water Quality Control Board San Francisco Bay Region

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Ross Valley Sanitary District to pay over \$1.5 million for Sewage Discharges into Corte Madera Creek and San Francisco Bay

Kentfield-The Ross Valley Sanitary District (District) faces more than \$1.5 million in fines from the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) for illegal sewage discharges stemming from incidents in late December 2010 and smaller spills over the past four years. The fines also address the District's failure to comply with state notification and reporting requirements.

The fines reflect a settlement between the Water Board's staff and the District. It must still be approved by the Water Board itself or its Executive Officer after a 30-day public comment period.

The discharges totaled 3.1 million gallons from the District's sanitary sewer collection system at various locations. The December 2010 discharges totaled 2.4 million gallons, and occurred between December 17 and 19, and on December 22 during heavy rains. The District had a pump station shut down for construction on a pipeline during that time, and a different pipeline broke without warning.

The settlement also addresses 28 smaller sewage discharges from January 1, 2008 to April 21, 2011, that were caused by blockages from roots and debris.

The settlement allows the District to spend up to about \$732,000 of the fine on local environmental projects. One of the projects that the District will undertake involves a \$482,000 grant program to help property owners repair and replace defective private sewer laterals connecting homes and businesses to the District's main sewer line. Many of the communities within the District have leaky, defective private sewer laterals not owned by the District.

The other environmental project will improve habitat for native plants and wildlife in a four-acre marsh adjacent to Corte Madera Creek near Bon Air Road. The District will spend \$250,000 on the project, which will be implemented by Friends of Corte Madera Creek Watershed, a non-profit organization.

The District is not unique in the Bay Area for having sewage collection system problems. The Regional Water Board began its program to address sewage spills in 2003, first with outreach to sewage collection system agencies, then with formal requirements, and finally with increased enforcement. The Water Board has penalized thirteen separate sewage collection system agencies over \$6 million since 2008.

C A L I F O R N I A E N V I R O N M E N T A L P R O T E C T I O N A G E N C Y



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For more information including a copy of the settlement agreement, please visit www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay

The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources, and ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.