

STATE OF THE DISTRICT An Historical Perspective

In order to fully understand where the District is today and make future plans, it is necessary to know the background and historical timeline of where the District has been and what it has accomplished.

Background

In the late Sixty's a perceived health issue arose in Tomales that created a building moratorium by the County. It was believed that the proximity of septic systems and drinking water wells on the small lots in Tomales created an outbreak of disease. The County mandated that Tomales residents build a water system or a sewer system before additional building could resume. The community voted for a sewer system and proceeded to have one built. North Marin County Water District was tasked with operating the system and in 1976 the sewer system was opened. It was built with grants and loans.

In 1996, one of the irrigation pipes broke and secondary treated wastewater flowed out for several days before it was noticed. North Marin was fined by the Regional Water Quality Control Board and rather than the District absorbing the fine, they chose to raise rates in Tomales to cover it. Residents in Tomales felt it was North Marin's lack of maintenance and inattention that caused the problem and that the fine should be covered by North Marin. A local committee was formed to negotiate with North Marin and out of those negotiations, the community got North Marin to spread the cost of the fine over their entire customer base; got a third party Operation and Maintenance company to operate the Tomales system rather than North Marin employees; and formed a Community Services District to detach from North Marin Water District and operate the sewer on its own. The TVCSD was voted on by the community and over 80% of the respondents approved the formation of the new District. It was formed by the Marin County Board of Supervisors and the Marin County Local Agency Formation Commission in 1999.

The new District hired an Administrator and an O&M company to run the District and maintain the system. The sewer system was turned over to the District in an AS-IS basis with a lot of deferred maintenance, old worn equipment, and the debt of the original construction loan. The detachment from North Marin went smoothly, but the total amount of reserves after twenty-five years was just \$144,000.

The new Board, the Administrator and the Operators developed a priority list of improvements that needed to be done and set out to find the funding to get it done. One of the main goals of the District was to provide safe, reliable and environmentally friendly wastewater treatment and reuse. The Administrator and Operators developed the design and specifications for the first phase of improvements to the WWTP. The Administrator applied for and secured grants as well as low interest loans to proceed.

Phase One WWTP Improvement Project

The first phase of the Improvement Project, started in 2002, included:

- Remove chlorine gas disinfectant and replace with safer liquid Sodium Hypochlorite
- Planning and Design, Construction Management, and other Construction Expenses
- Replace 8" worn and rusted pipeline at storage ponds and put it underground
- Installed air gap in force main pipe going to storage ponds to eliminate chance of backflow

Repaired several sections of collection line and manholes to reduce inflow and infiltration
 Replaced one of the circular irrigation guns with a 30 head Rain Bird array for better irrigation
 Replaced grinder pumps and infrastructure at lower town lift station and repaired walls
 Installed state of the art Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system to monitor
 the controls operating the wastewater system, initiate alarms if there is a problem, and
 turn on and off needed equipment as necessary, all from a remote location.

Funding for the first phase of Improvements and the payoff of the original construction loan
 came from grants, low interest loans and the capital contribution component of the agreement
 with the SUSD.

Grants:

CDBG	\$ 7,212	
SWRCB SCG	\$119,070	
SWRCD SCG	\$ 7,301	Total \$133,583

Loans:

SWRCB SRF	\$ 75,330
-----------	-----------

Other:

SUSD Capital Component	\$ 31,000
------------------------	-----------

Phase Two WWTP Improvement Project

The Second Phase of the Improvement Project, started in 2005, included:

Planning and Design, Construction Management, and other Construction Expenses
 Install a Level Transmitter to record Storage pond depth in SCADA system
 Install a Fats, Oil and Grease interceptor to keep treatment ponds free of grease
 Remove abandoned sand filter and retrofit to treatment pond #1 with circular plumbing system
 to other ponds
 Remove and dispose of 30 years of accumulated biosolids from treatment pond
 Rebuild and retrofit original treatment pond to a two cell pond with circular plumbing to the other
 ponds
 Install sub-drain, sump and pump and Hypalon liner in all treatment cells
 Purchase and install two new high lift pumps
 Purchase and install two new aerators
 Purchase and install new influent flow meter and SCADA monitoring
 Purchase and install new effluent flow meter and SCADA monitoring
 Upgrade SCADA monitoring and Alarms for new pond levels and pump operation
 Replace the lower town Lift station control panel
 Re-rock and grade road to storage pond and treatment plant
 Contract for a long term tertiary feasibility study for water reuse

Funding for the second phase of Improvements came from grants, low interest loans, and the
 capital contribution component of the agreement with the SUSD

Grants:

SWRCB Clean Water	\$449,842
CDBG	\$ 20,000

FEMA	\$ 14,454	Total \$484,296
Loans:		
SWRCB SRF	\$240,264	
Other:		
SUSD Capital Component	\$124,924	

With a sewer system in total disarray with deferred maintenance and serious infrastructure problems, your District was able to rebuild and replace the core components of the entire wastewater treatment system for a little over \$1 million dollars, increase the cash reserve position from \$144,000 to \$385,000, pay off a \$162,000 construction loan, and do it all with grants, loans and capital funding. The current balance on the low interest State Revolving Fund Loan is \$194,126.

Solar Project

But your District wasn't finished there. In keeping with the mission to be environmentally friendly, the District embarked on an ambitious plan to provide 95% of its energy usage through solar generation. The Administrator, with the assistance of the Marin County Energy Management Team, was able to garner \$305,000 in zero interest bond funding to build a solar array at the WWTP and a second array at the Irrigation Field with a combined generation of 31.8kW. The community of Tomales supported this project by agreeing to a \$5/mo rate increase in 2009 that is used only to pay down the bonds and is not used for any other operating costs. Additionally, the California Solar Initiative refunds the district based on the usage and generation and accumulates enough to make the annual bond payment with some left over. The District is currently saving hundreds of dollars a month on PGE costs and when the system is fully paid for, the solar project will save the District 10's of thousands of dollars over the life of the system. We are five years into the project now and have another three years of rebates under the CSI. The balance due on the bonds currently is \$233,235.

Grants:		
CSI Rebates – to date	\$ 41,033	Total \$41,033
Loans:		
Zero Interest Bonds	\$305,000	

Park Project

When the District was formed in 1999, it assumed the operation and ownership of the Tomales Community Park in an AS-IS condition, as well. Although the Park was built with the finest materials and had served the community for a number of years, new state and federal requirements made it necessary to rebuild the Park. The District board, with the oversight of David Judd embarked on another ambitious endeavor. In order to meet accessible requirements, the entire park had to be re-graded and terraced as you see it today. Additionally, each play area for different age groups had to have containment borders to maintain the required fall surfaces. The community wanted permanent bathrooms, open space and play structures that would entertain and interest the young people of the community. The project was a labor of love for David and all of the volunteers that helped build the Park. The total project was paid for through grants and donations and now future improvements and maintenance is guaranteed through the funding of Measure A.

Grants:

CDBG 2005	\$ 12,800	
First Five Marin	\$ 5,000	
CDBG 2007	\$ 5,410	
BOS 2007	\$ 20,000	
State RZH Grant	\$ 94,000	
Federal LWCF	\$ 86,387	
SB 90 Reimbursements	\$ 13,802	
Trex Corporation	\$ 7,000	
BOS 2011	\$ 10,000	
BOS 2013	\$ 15,000	
Dean Witter Fdn	\$ 10,000	
Measure A	\$ 17,375	Total \$296,774

Loans:

TVCSO Sewer	\$ 25,000
-------------	-----------

The sewer loan has been paid back with fundraisers and donations and currently stands at \$9,000.

Recap

The District has been able to add \$1,600,000 in infrastructure improvements for the community over the last 14 years; increase the cash reserves by \$241,000; pay off a high interest construction loan; reduce annual operating costs for PGE; and garnered over \$955,000 in grants to help pay for it all.

Because of the foresight and dedication of previous Boards of the TVCSO, the District has been honored with commendations from the California State Assembly, the Marin County Board of Supervisors and was named the Small Wastewater Treatment Plant of the Year by the California Water Environment Association Redwood Empire Section, two years in a row. Future plans and directions are now up to a new Board and the Operators and the Administrator will be working closely with them and providing recommendations to help them with their decisions.