

# BCPUD PIPELINE



Summer 2022

270 Elm Road, P.O. Box 390, Bolinas, CA 94924 (415) 868-1224

**Do you have a question for the BCPUD? Please call us!**

If you spot a potential problem that you think might be taking place on the BCPUD's water or sewer system, please call us at (415) 868-1224, any time, day or night, to report your concern. If the local staff is not in the office, we have an answering service that can page our on-call operator at any hour.

From time to time, we have noticed posts about water leaks or other BCPUD related problems on Nextdoor or on other forms of social media. We ask that you please call our office to report any issues as we may not see your post online in a timely manner. We encourage you to let us know if you see or hear anything unusual and the best way to do that is by phone.

Thank you!

**Water or Sewer emergency? Please contact our office at 415-868-1224**

## **Fats, Oils, Grease, Wipes and Rags – the Costly Implications Of Flushing these Materials into the BCPUD Sewer System (or your Septic Tank!)**

During the last year or so, the BCPUD has narrowly averted serious damage to the community's sewer system caused by accumulations of fats, oils, grease, wipes and rags that were flushed into the system. In one case, these materials combined to form a large obstruction in the manhole outside the Wharf Road Lift station, almost blocking the flow of wastewater (which could have led to a sewer spill). Fortunately, the blockage was identified by BCPUD staff and a contractor was hired to remove the blockage with an industrial vacuum truck. In another case, similar materials combined to nearly freeze shut a critical check valve on our force main; once again, prompt responsive action by BCPUD staff and contractors saved the day. There is a cautionary tale here, however, and it is one we have apprised the community of before: ***flushing non-water-soluble materials into the BCPUD sewer system has expensive consequences for sewer customers in the form of emergency contractor visits, pump repairs and replacements and, on occasion, sewer spills.***



Wipes and rags obstructing a BCPUD check valve.

Please remember: **WIPES AND RAGS ARE NOT FLUSHABLE!!!** Wipes and rags will damage the BCPUD's sewer pumps – as well as combine with fats, oils and grease to create blockages – and should never be flushed down your toilet (whether you are on the sewer system or not, as septic systems cannot handle these products either). To the extent that packaging for these products describes them as “flushable” (which will be changing due to passage of new laws about the labeling of these products), that is misleading at best: wipes and rags do not break down during the sewage treatment process (because they typically are made with synthetic materials, plastics or polyester) and are a leading cause of damage to sewer systems throughout the country. In contrast, toilet paper is designed to disintegrate in sewer and septic systems. Please do your part to help keep our sewer system (or your septic system) healthy and do not flush wipes or rags!



As for fats, oils and grease (sometimes referred to as “FOG”), common sources include meat fats, lard, shortening, butter, margarine, food scraps, baked goods, cream-based sauces and cooking oil. Liquefied grease and fat will solidify and clog pipes, or coat pipes and contribute to blockages. Blockages may lead to a back-up into your home, or trigger an overflow or back-up of sewage into the streets or ocean. **Please scrape greasy food scraps from pots, pans and dishes into your kitchen scrap recycling and wipe off these pots, pans and dishes with a paper towel or newspaper before washing them** (the soiled paper

towels or newspaper also can go into your kitchen scrap recycling). Please also be sure to pour all cooled cooking fats, oils and grease into a container to dispose of properly and **do not** wash them down the drain.

*If you rent your home or employ a cleaning service, please share this information with your tenants and/or service providers to ensure they know they should never flush fats, oils, grease, wipes or rags into the BCPUD sewer system.*



We are confident that, by educating our community and working together, we will be able to reduce or eliminate this problem in our district, thereby reducing expensive sewer system emergency response and repair costs to our customers. Thank you for all that you do to help!!!

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### Water Supply Update: How are we doing?

At the regular monthly BCPUD Board of Directors meeting on July 20, 2022, staff reported that the district closed out the 2021-22 rain year on June 30<sup>th</sup> with a total of 27.57 inches of rain received. This is 11.15 inches more than the 16.42 inches of rain received during the previous year, but it was the third year in a row of below-average rainfall. Average rainfall in Bolinas is approximately 32.5 inches per year. While the district’s emergency backup reservoirs currently are very close to full and the BCPUD is supplying the town with water from the Arroyo Hondo Creek, water consumption has been increasing steadily in recent months and, if this trend continues, the district will need to start drawing upon its emergency stored water supply to meet demand. As recently as April 2022, water consumption was averaging about 64,000 gallons per day in the district, or 104 gallons per day per connection. In July, that consumption had climbed to nearly 85,000 gallons per day, or 144 gallons per day per connection. Based on prior years’ experience, we know this increase in water use is largely due to landscape irrigation. Accordingly, as we enter the heart of the dry season (late Summer and early Fall), please be mindful of your water use, minimize outdoor watering as much as possible, and always remember that Bolinas has a limited water supply in the best of times.

