



NOVATO SANITARY DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 16, 2012

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Regulators and Sanitary District Finalize Settlement Agreement

Novato Sanitary District reached a global settlement agreement with the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board on all outstanding sanitary sewer regulatory issues that occurred between 2007 and 2010. These issues date from a time when the old treatment plant was still being operated, and before the new treatment was complete.

The global settlement is for \$344,000 in fines covering 30 different events, virtually all of which are sewer spills and overflows that most significantly occurred during heavy storms and flooding in 2008. The District has been authorized by the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board to apply \$140,138 of the fine to Audubon wetlands habitat restoration projects in Bahia and Simonds Slough, that will remove non-native vegetation, plant native plant species and improve potential habitat for rare and endangered species including the red-legged frog.

Among the issues in the global settlement was an accusation that in 2007 wastewater was discharged incorrectly from the old treatment plant. A federal investigation of this issue was dropped without any action except to refer it to state regulators. State authorities conducted an investigation, and the District retained independent, internationally recognized experts to review the entire matter. They produced a 110 page detailed forensic evaluation of the situation, which is available at the District's website at www.novatosan.com/newsletters-press-documents/documents

The investigation categorically determined that there was no merit in the accusations, there was no discharge of untreated sewage, and the old treatment plant upset was properly reported.

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The District has been systematically rebuilding its 1960s-era sewer system as part of a \$200 million, 15-year program that is expected to be complete by about 2015.

Since the 2007-2010 time period during which the series of events occurred, the District has completed a modern treatment plant, improved the capacity of the sewer pipeline system, repaired major cracks and breaks, upgraded sewer pumps, and vastly improved automated controls and increased maintenance, while adding backup power generators.

As a result of all these improvements, the District expects that this will be the last settlement of this size and type facing the District.

All parties to the global agreement—the District and the State and Regional Water Quality Control Boards—share a common commitment to protecting public health and the environment, and are pleased with the outcome of this agreement.

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