

# COUNTY of MARIPOSA



**Peter M. Rei**  
*Director*

4639 Ben Hur Road  
Mariposa, CA 95338  
Phone: (209) 966-5356  
Fax: (209) 966-2828

**August 30, 2012**

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

### Divisions of:

Administration	Airport
Cemeteries	County Surveyor Design & Engineering
Construction	Parks & Rec.
Facilities	Solid Waste
Roads	Fleet Maintenance
Transportation	

### Summary of Current Issues affecting Yosemite West

Hello:

The intent of this correspondence is to update the community concerning issues affecting the Yosemite West subdivision and the Maintenance District. Both Supervisor Lee Stetson and staff have been working diligently to provide Yosemite West with the best service that we can. The following is a current status of various issues of concern:

#### **Sewer System:**

Staff has been working with Provost and Pritchard, a Fresno based Civil Engineering firm who specialize in water and sewer system design and construction to determine how well the current sewer collection system, treatment system and disposal system are operating.

We have a preliminary report from Provost and Pritchard for the sewage treatment plant which we received in May. On September 5-7, Provost and Pritchard staff will be working in the subdivision to refine their recommendations of what needs to be done to optimize the performance of the sewage treatment system as well as taking a look at the options for increased sewage disposal (leachfields, emitter systems). This is important because in early June the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) received a citizen complaint concerning the condition of the sewage treatment and disposal system. On June 6, 2012, a representative of the RWQCB visited the site and inspected the system. Our discussions with that representative since his June 6 visit indicate that a Notice of Violation will be coming to the County identifying issues of concern to the RWQCB and spelling out the timeline for repairs to be completed. As of yet that notice has not been received by County staff.

Once we receive the notice from the RWQCB and Provost and Pritchard have a chance to refine what they believe needs to be done, Public Works will authorize the design and ask the Board of Supervisors for permission to construct any required repairs to the sewage treatment and sewage disposal infrastructure. These repairs will be paid from the Yosemite West Utility Capital Fund. The balance in the Utility Capital Fund as of August 28, 2012 is \$219,707.

Once the needed repairs to the treatment plant and the disposal systems have been identified by Provost and Pritchard the next item of work will be the evaluation of the sewage collection system. The original sewage collection piping was installed in the late 1960's and the material used was transite. Transite pipe has proven over time to be very brittle and easily damaged by tree roots, ground shifts, backhoe excavations etc.

Almost every agency that I am aware of has made great efforts to replace their old aging transite pipe with newer PVC pipe which performs much better. If this were to be proposed for Yosemite West this is a very large undertaking and may be quite costly. However, we know that the current pipes are cracking and letting groundwater into the sewage collection piping. This is known in the business as infiltration. When this additional water arrives at the treatment plant it adds to the volume of effluent that the plant is required to treat. It also then adds to the volume of treated effluent that needs to be run through the disposal system.

Ideally the goal is to reduce the infiltration amount to the minimum possible. The most effective means of doing this is to replace the sewage collection piping throughout the subdivision. Based on the age of the old transite piping it is highly likely that this will be the recommendation from Provost and Pritchard once they get the opportunity to evaluate the current collection infrastructure. Any repairs to the current sewage collection infrastructure would also be paid out of the YW Utility Capital Fund.

### **Water System:**

Currently the water system appears to be functioning well. During late July we experienced multiple failures of pressure reducing valves in the water system. These valves moderate the high water pressure that is present due to the differences in elevation throughout the subdivision. Unfortunately, once these pressure reducing valves began to fail it started a chain of events leading to water main breakages, which, in turn, caused the water tank levels to drop to very low levels. At these low levels, sediments on the bottom of the storage tank were introduced into the water supply. These sediments caused us to issue a Boil Order for the water in compliance with State Department of Public Health regulations.

After considerable effort and overtime by our crews and hired contractors we have been able to remove the Boil Order and repair most of the pressure reducing valves that caused the initial problems. There are five pressure reducing valves that remain to be replaced. These are scheduled to be serviced immediately following the Labor Day weekend. Once these valves are replaced the system should be in good working order. All costs to repair and replace the problematic water infrastructure will also be charged to the YW Utility Capital Fund.

Once Provost and Pritchard have had the opportunity to complete their review and recommendations for the sewage collection, treatment and disposal systems we intend to have them investigate the water storage and distribution system and provide us a report on what improvements need to be made. The same transite pipe that was used for the sewage collection system was also used for the water distribution system piping. Thus, it is highly probable that Provost and Pritchard will conclude that the water collection piping needs to be replaced for the same reason stated earlier for the sewage collection piping. Again, this is a significant effort and expense. Once the improvements are identified, designed and ready for construction we will ask the Board of Supervisors to authorize construction of the needed improvements. As with the other issues discussed any improvements would need to be paid for by the YW Utility Capital Fund.

### **Roads:**

Currently, the road system is experiencing significant deterioration. This is expected with aging roads in a high elevation climate. Our current efforts are focused on repairing the surface condition of the roadways, primarily by repairing potholes. This is a band-aid approach and does nothing to improve the roadway structural section or its longevity. Residents currently pay \$8 per month per parcel to fund roadway repairs and improvements. This amount is nowhere near enough to pay for the needed improvements to the roadways.

Public Works staff has two previous estimates of the costs to repave the roadways throughout the subdivision. These estimates vary from \$900,000 to \$1,100,000. The true cost would be the actual bid price from a contractor whenever the improvements are put out for public bids.

In order to make the needed roadway improvements additional funding will be needed. Public Works staff will be putting together a proposal of how to fund these improvements in the next few months. Once we have the funding needs we will be able to inform the community what the additional costs will be to fund these improvements.

Of significant note is the fact that it really is not wise to make the needed roadway improvements until the water and sewer pipes have been replaced. Asphalt is quite expensive and it is always best to have the roadway repaving follow any repairs to utilities that are located beneath the roadway.

### **Burn Pile:**

As the residents know, the owners of the property upon which the historic burn pile is located have denied the use of that burn pile location in 2012. We are currently negotiating with the ownership group to acquire the property. Two options have been developed for the owners to consider. These options will be forwarded to the owners later this week for their review and consideration. Following that review staff hopes that a deal can be finalized with the owners that will allow the historic burn pile location to be owned by the Maintenance District. Should this occur it would allow the residents to be able to use the burn pile location in a manner similar to what has been done in past years. We ask your patience as we work through this process. It is unclear at this time how much the land acquisition will ultimately cost and where the funding for that acquisition will come from. These questions will be our next challenge as we move forward.

I hope this summary helps residents to be better informed of the current issues that Public Works is managing on your behalf.

Peter Rei  
Director