



Points of Interest

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Volume 7 Issue 2

March/April 2011

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VALLEJO SANITATION & FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

Currents

MERCURY AND OUR BAY



We know that mercury is bad for our health, and we hear that mercury levels in fish from the San Francisco Bay are a concern. But how did mercury get in the bay, and what can we do about it?

The reality is that mercury has been in the bay for a long time. An estimated 220 million pounds of mercury were mined in the Sierras from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. Additionally, more than 26 million pounds of mercury were used for gold recovery. During these activities, says the U.S. Geological Society, about 10-30% of all the mercury used was lost into mountain streams and has been making its way, attached to sediment particles, into the bay and delta.

This pollution has resulted in the bay being listed as an impaired water body under the Clean Water Act, and a bay-wide fish consumption advisory has been enacted by the Calif. Office of Environmental

Health Hazard Assessment.

The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board has set limits on mercury discharges to the bay, and is working with cities and counties to clean up old waste sites. Over the past decade, the San Francisco Estuary Institute has monitored for mercury.

As Jane Kay reported in the SF Chronicle, “The bigger fish eat the smaller fish, and the mercury accumulates up the food chain at higher concentrations. People who eat a lot of fish from the bay face unnecessary risk, particularly pregnant women and children. Research shows that the toxic metal can cause such health effects as fatigue, headaches and memory loss.”

While scientists and regulators work on the big picture, there are small things that residents can do

to help:

Fish and shellfish are an important part of a healthy diet. They contain high-quality protein and other essential nutrients. But some contain higher levels of mercury; so check out the Safe Eating Guidelines at www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.

CFLs, other fluorescent light bulbs, and some batteries contain small amounts of mercury. Dispose of them properly at the household hazardous waste facility at the Vallejo-Napa Household Hazardous Waste Facility at 889-A Devlin Road in American Canyon. It is open Friday and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

To dispose of thermometers, see the Tip of the Season on page 2.

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TEACH TRASH-FREE HABITS EARLY



Here are some tips for a trash-free lunch box for school, daycare or on-the-go families:

- Pack lunch in a reusable bag or lunch box.
 - Store sandwiches in reusable containers or wrap them in a cloth napkin.
 - Smaller items can be stored in reusable containers or tied up in a napkin.
 - Use a thermos or reusable bottle for drinks.
 - Don't purchase fruit in individual packaging.
 - Pack cloth napkins and durable utensils as needed.
 - Avoid single-use items like paper bags, plastic baggies, chip bags, pudding cups, etc. — save money and resources by sending individual servings in reusable containers.
 - Old dishtowels can be repurposed as napkins.
- Go online and Google “waste free lunches” for more great ideas.

We teach even our youngest children simple lessons about taking care of the earth. Now let's make lunch boxes and snacks as trash-free as possible.

When litter hits the ground, it's more than just an eyesore. Litter is easily washed into storm

drains by rain. From there it travels to local creeks and the Bay, where it disrupts delicate ecosystems, harming fish and wildlife. Eventually, our local litter also adds to the floating garbage load in the Pacific Ocean—some-thing many children have heard about in school.

NEW DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

On February 8, 2011, the District Board awarded a new project to D'Arcy & Harty. This company has successfully completed many projects for the District and has a reputation for high quality work and good relations with our residents. D'Arcy & Harty was the lowest of 22 bidders for the project.

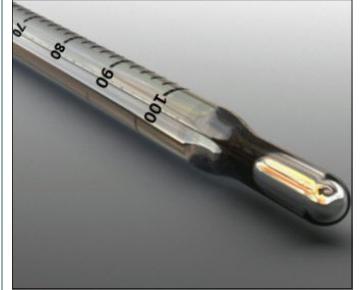
The contractor will replace some of the sewer and storm drain pipes in Carlson Street. The storm drain system is connected

to a private property adjacent to Carlson Street where the drainage is causing problems. The project will re-direct the flow to an existing storm drain system in Lemon Street.

The sewers in Carlson Street have been a problem to the District for a long time. One pipe has a reverse grade and requires maintenance every two weeks. It is expected that the new storm drain and sewer

systems will be nearly maintenance free.

Work will occur mostly in the street, but trenching for the installation of new pipes will leave some driveways inaccessible for short periods of time. The contractor will give the residents ample warning about the closure of their driveway. After completion of the underground work, Carlson Street will be “slurry sealed” for a clean, even appearance.



Tip of the Season

EARTH DAY is coming early this year!

On Saturday, April 16, join us at the Downtown Vallejo Farmers' Market from 9:00 to 1:00 along Georgia Street west of Sonoma Blvd.

There will be tons of wonderful things to do, and don't forget to bring your old mercury fever thermometer to the Vallejo San booth ... we'll give you a free digital thermometer in exchange (limit one per person).



Currents is printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks. It is produced bimonthly by the Vallejo Sanitation & Flood Control District. For more information, visit www.VSFCD.com or call (707) 644-8949 ext. 292.

