



# THE PIPELINE

Official Newsletter of Rogue Valley Sewer Services

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## Here's what you'll find in this issue

- \* Stormwater Vaults
- \* Prescription Pollution
- \* Sustainability
- \* Featured Employee
- \* Goal 11

## New Structures Clean Stormwater



2009 will bring cleaner water to Bear Creek thanks to the installation of two stormwater quality features. The new structures are located on Gangnes Street in Talent and just west of the bike path at the end of East 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Phoenix. They are part of the water quality efforts which RVS is managing for the Cities of Central Point, Phoenix and Talent and a portion of Jackson County.

The stormwater structures will trap trash, sediment, oil and other pollutants before stormwater can enter Bear Creek. (When it rains bottles, bags, bark, sediment and

other pollutants that are in the street will be trapped by these structures before they can flow into the local creeks.) Most stormwater flows directly into creeks without any treatment. RVS is changing this as part of its Phase II Permit. To date, RVS has installed approximately five stormwater quality structures that trap pollutants coming from residential and commercial areas before it enters Bear Creek. Additionally, RVS has required at least 25 new developments to install similar structures to clean up stormwater. These structures will also provide a location to trap pollutants if there is an accidental spill.

Adding these structures is a good way to protect the local creeks, although a better way is not to let pollutants get into the stormwater runoff in the first place. Everyone can help by not letting pollutants such as oil, pesticides, herbicides, soaps, mud, or paint be dumped into the storm drain. Remember – Only rain should go down the storm drain.

If you see someone dumping anything into the storm drains, please give us a call at 541-664-6300. This will give us an opportunity to educate more of the public on the importance of keeping our creeks and waterways clean.

*Our Mission is to provide sewer services in the safest and most cost-effective manner possible while maintaining the quality of life along with the health and safety of our Rogue Valley customers.*

# Pollution Prevention Starts With You

Did you know that every day the average adult uses nine personal care products containing 126 unique compounds that could end up in our water? In addition to traces of products like shampoo, toothpaste, perfume, sunscreens and cosmetics, minute amounts of prescription and OTC (over the counter) drugs make their way into water. They should be limited or prevented from entering our environment.

Often the products we use and the medications we take are not entirely absorbed by our bodies. Any excess is excreted or washed off into our sewers and then into our wastewater and surface waters. Moreover, many people dispose of prescription and OTC drugs incorrectly by flushing them down the toilet.

Using advanced analytical equipment, scientists can detect these compounds in all types of water—groundwater, streams, wastewater and drinking water. Comparatively speaking, these minute traces are as tiny as a pinch of salt in 10 tons of potato chips. While there is no evidence to suggest risk to human health, scientist have found interference with aquatic organisms, and studies continue. Meanwhile, it's prudent to control what we put into water, and everyone's help is important. Whenever possible, it's important to keep pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs) out of our water. PPCPS include:

- Prescription and OTC therapeutic drugs
- Fragrances
- Cosmetics

- Sunscreen products
- Insect repellent
- Vitamins
- Veterinary drugs

PPCPs also include antibacterial hand and dish soap. According to a Food and Drug administration panel, antibacterial soaps and washes are no more effective than regular soap and water in fighting infection in everyday use.



While some PPCPs are easily broken down and processed by the human body or degrade quickly in the environment, others are not. They can pass through sewer to treatment plants in very minute amounts and find their way into our creeks, rivers and streams.

**Controlling what goes down the drain is the easiest and most effective way to protect the environment.**

## HELP KEEP OUR DRAINS DRUG-FREE!

One important way consumers can help is through proper disposal of unused pharmaceutical\* or OTC and prescription drugs such as antibiotics, analgesics, anti-inflammatories, anti-depressants and oral contraceptives is mixing them with kitty litter or other materials before placing them in your garbage receptacle.

\*Source: The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy consumer guidance for the Proper Disposal of Prescription Drugs at [www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/factsht/proper\\_disposal.html](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/factsht/proper_disposal.html)

The preceding article was made available to us by The Water Environment Federation. For more information, please visit their website @ [www.wef.org](http://www.wef.org)

## What is Sustainability?

We hear a lot these days about sustainability, but everyone seems to have their own definition of the term. At Rogue Valley Sewer Services we have embraced the science based framework of *The Natural Step* which identifies four basic conditions which must be present to have a sustainable society. These conditions are:

- Concentrations of materials extracted from the earth's crust do not increase
- Concentrations of man-made materials do not increase
- The earth is not physically degraded faster than

it can restore itself

- Humans have the ability to meet their basic needs.

The easiest way to begin the journey to sustainability is to focus on reducing waste and controlling the consumption of resources. At RVS we have begun this journey by taking simple steps to monitor and reduce our consumption and make wiser purchasing decisions. By making these changes we will not only be doing our part as stewards of the earth, we will also be protecting ourselves and our customers by making us more resilient and better able to withstand economic downturns.

### FEATURED EMPLOYEE

#### CARL TAPPERT

To provide top-notch professional service we need top-notch professional employees, which is why we are so fortunate to have someone as capable and astute as Carl Tappert. As our District Engineer and Assistant Manager, he supervises our engineering department and our construction crew. He also oversees the design of all of our construction projects, creates complete and easy to understand specifications, works with private sector contractors and neighboring governments, and formulates our Capital Improvement Programs.

Since correctly installed infrastructure will last well in excess of 100 years, we must do it right the first time. This is why it is so crucial to have a quality Engineer. Governor Kulongoski has also recognized his talents by appointing him to the State Board of Examiners for Engineers and Land Surveyors.

Carl is also leading our efforts at sustainability by working with a group of key personnel evaluating everything from the amount of electricity used to experimenting with clay pipe and solar panels. One could say that Carl helps in every task we accomplish.

When not overseeing and continuing improvements on our system Carl is the Assistant Manager of a household with a menagerie of 4 children and owner of 6 sheep, 2 llamas, 1 donkey, 4 dogs, 8 cats, and 13 chickens.





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## Working Together to Make a Difference For You

Jackson County, along with RVS and other agencies, is working on a project to make it possible and/or easier for rural properties to hook up to the RVS sewer system. Currently, State law generally requires rural property owners to go through a time consuming and expensive process called "A Goal 11 Exception" in order to be allowed to hookup to RVS. While this regulation makes sense in other areas of the state, we in Jackson County have unique soil conditions (high water table, heavy clay, etc.) that often make septic systems difficult to support. These conditions have led, and continue to lead, to failing septic systems which may harm water quality in our streams and rivers. Because of these factors, Jackson County, with the help of our partners, has started an area-wide (as opposed to property-by-property) Goal 11 exception process. This process began by identifying areas with poor septic suitability that are within the RVS service area and near existing sewer lines. If this Goal 11 exception is approved, those properties within the exception area will have the opportunity to hookup to the RVS sewer system. In December the County will hold public hearings to address comments on what you think about this proposal. Here are some of the benefits of this proposal:

- \* Sewer will only be provided if property owners request it and pay for it
- \* Costly, time consuming land use process will not be required
- \* Water quality will be improved
- \* Current zoning regulations remain in effect (this proposal is not intended to allow for additional development)

The first Planning Commission hearing on the Jackson County Area-Wide Goal 11 Exception will be at 9:00 am on December 10th, 2009 at the Jackson County Courthouse, 10 S. Oakdale, Medford.

For additional information, please call 774-6938 or look for this item under the "news" section at [www.jacksoncounty.org](http://www.jacksoncounty.org)