

**FUTURE-PROOFING  
CENTRAL SAN**  
PAGES 4-5

**SUMMER  
ACTIVITIES**  
PAGES 8-9

**DISTRICT  
DIVISIONS**  
PAGE 12

**BUILDING A  
BRIGHTER  
FUTURE**



# GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE



In a rapidly changing world, the infrastructure we build today must be ready to meet the challenges of tomorrow. While we may not be able to predict the future, at Central San we are working hard to ensure that we're prepared to positively deal with the changes it will bring.

That's why we're making long-term investments in our wastewater system that go beyond simply replacing what's already there. The facilities we design must be adaptable and resilient to meet the changing needs of our community and emerging regulatory requirements. For example, as we upgrade our aging treatment plant, we're focused on meeting growing regional demand for recycled water as well as stringent new regulations on nutrients in treated wastewater to safeguard the health of San Francisco Bay.

Additionally, as we look to the future, we're exploring ways to enhance efficiency, minimize our climate impacts, and better protect the environment.

We'll soon be flipping the switch on a new solar array that will generate clean power to help offset energy use across our operations. We're also finalizing plans for transitioning our vehicle fleet from gas-powered to electric in the coming years to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet California's rigorous new air quality requirements. To learn more about how we're future-proofing Central San, turn to pages 4-6.

And in the nearer future? We're planning an array of fun educational events! We invite you to join us this summer for a bike tour of our service area, a walking tour of our treatment plant, or our award-winning citizens' academy. You can find details about all of our upcoming events on pages 8-9. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about where your wastewater goes—and how we're ensuring that our system withstands the test of time.

*We look forward to seeing you this summer!*

**Roger S. Bailey**  
General Manager



# TOP-TIER PERFORMANCE

At Central San, we take our responsibility to protect the environment very seriously. Our team works tirelessly to ensure that every drop of water we clean meets or exceeds strict regional, state, and federal water quality standards before we discharge it into beautiful Suisun Bay.

This past year, Central San extended our record of 100% compliance with our National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit to 25 consecutive years—a quarter century without a single permit violation. In recognition of this milestone achievement, Central San was recently honored

with the Platinum-25 Peak Performance Award from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA).

Central San's success streak is the longest of any wastewater utility in California and tied for 9th in the nation. We're very proud of this accomplishment, but we couldn't have done it without you! Your efforts to keep pollutants out of our sewer system and waterways have made a significant impact. We are very grateful for the support and partnership of our customers.

*Thank you!*



# FUTURE-PROOFING CENTRAL SAN

As we upgrade our aging wastewater infrastructure, we must design and build it with the future in mind. Here are some of the ways we're working to ensure our system is reliable, resilient, and sustainable for years to come.

## HARNESSING THE POWER OF THE SUN

Central San's new solar array project will offset over 3.5 million kilowatt hours of grid energy usage across our operations every year. That's most of the annual grid demand of our treatment plant as well as a portion of our major pumping stations. By harnessing the sun's energy, the 1.75-megawatt project is expected to reduce carbon emissions by nearly 2,000 metric tons annually—the equivalent of 4,600,000 vehicle miles. In addition to conserving resources, the project will save an estimated \$6 million in energy costs over the next 25 years. With construction nearly complete, we anticipate flipping the switch this summer to begin generating clean, renewable energy!

## MANAGING NUTRIENTS IN SF BAY

The Bay Area's wastewater treatment facilities are on the front lines of the environmental stewardship of San Francisco Bay. As we look to the future, managing nutrients in the Bay presents a significant challenge. Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus can enter our wastewater from human waste, food, soaps, and detergents. Even after wastewater is cleaned to required rigorous standards, some nutrients may remain in the water. When these nutrients enter the Bay, they can lead to excessive algal growth, harming the Bay's health. Due to climate change, historically "normal" levels of nutrients may now be too much for the Bay's ecosystem.

Along with our partners in the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA), Central San is funding a multi-year research effort to better understand the sources and impacts of nutrients in the Bay. This science-first approach is critical to developing practical and effective solutions. Additionally, Central San is piloting new technology and exploring approaches that would provide multiple benefits, such as enhancing our recycled water production to reduce nutrient discharges to the Bay while also conserving our region's precious drinking water supplies.

## OPTIMIZING OUR OPERATIONS

Building upon Central San's long-standing tradition of innovation, our new Optimizations Division is tasked with improving our efficiency and effectiveness through projects and programs of all sizes. One of this work group's major projects this year involves testing cutting-edge wastewater treatment equipment. The Membrane Aerated Biofilm Reactor pilot project offers an exciting possibility for process intensification—that is, achieving more treatment within existing tankage. This technology could help Central San meet potential future regulations on nutrients while reducing capital investments for new treatment tankage and equipment.

Another priority is to convert the vast amounts of data we collect from our treatment plant into actionable information through real-time data analysis. Our Optimizations Division is pilot testing a process advisor that uses machine learning and AI-supported algorithms to recommend changes aimed at reducing costs and enhancing equipment performance. This information can then be used by our operations and maintenance teams to improve the efficiency of our treatment plant operations.

## PLANNING THE FLEET OF THE FUTURE

Central San has developed a Fleet Electrification Strategic Plan to serve as a roadmap for transitioning our fleet from internal combustion engines to zero emissions vehicles over the next 15 years. The plan will help Central San meet California's new Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) regulation, which sets standards for vehicle purchases by state and local government agencies to improve air quality and reduce climate impacts. Additionally, it will help advance our Net Zero goals and better fulfill our mission of protecting the environment.

We're excited about building a more sustainable fleet, but the transition will be no simple task! Central San maintains over 100 vehicles, including specialty trucks that are instrumental in cleaning and maintaining over 1,500 miles of sewer pipes. In addition to optimizing our vehicle replacement schedule, we must design and install charging infrastructure to keep our fleet running smoothly. The strategic plan is a crucial step to ensuring a cost-effective transition that meets ACF requirements while preserving our fleet's reliability for day-to-day operations and emergency response.

# PREPARING FOR THE UNEXPECTED

Preparing for the future also means being ready for the unexpected. Central San is participating in a county-wide effort to develop a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan in collaboration with cities, water agencies, school districts, fire districts, and other partners. The plan includes short- and long-term actions that we can take before a disaster to minimize loss of life, injuries, and property damage in our community.

In addition to the county planning process, Central San is implementing plans and projects to safeguard our wastewater infrastructure from potential hazards like storms, flooding, earthquakes, and wildfires. These preparations will help ensure we can continue protecting public health and the environment if a disaster strikes.

Among these projects, Central San is working with Contra Costa County Flood Control District to raise the levees along Grayson Creek and Walnut Creek

to protect our wastewater treatment plant against flooding from a 500-year storm event. We're also completing seismic retrofits of critical facilities and buildings at our treatment plant and pumping stations to protect against damage in an earthquake.

Participating in the county's Local Hazard Mitigation planning process makes Central San eligible to apply for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding to further support our emergency preparedness efforts.

Emergency preparedness is not just something Central San is thinking about—it's something everyone should consider. Central San and Contra Costa County offer information on actions to prepare yourself, your family, and your neighbors in case of a disaster. Find out more at: [centralsan.org/emergency-preparedness](https://centralsan.org/emergency-preparedness)

## HOW TO CONTACT US FOR SEWER EMERGENCIES

**SPILLS OR OVERFLOWS:** Central San has one of the best reliability records in the state. Overflows are rare, but they do occur. If you see, smell, or suspect a sewage overflow or spill, please call us immediately at (925) 933-0990. We will dispatch a crew to investigate and take appropriate action as quickly as possible.

**TROUBLESOME COVERS:** The covers on our maintenance access holes (a.k.a. "manholes") can occasionally create tripping hazards, noise, or other problems. If you notice a cover in need of repair or adjustment, call us at (925) 933-0990.

**ODORS:** To report bothersome odors from our treatment plant or sewer system, call our Odor Hotline at (925) 335-7703.

**What does an overflow look like?**  
Here's an example of what to watch for. (Photo taken at Central San's overflow simulator training facility.)



# NEIGHBORHOOD UPGRADES

Central San regularly maintains, repairs, or replaces sewer lines and other parts of our wastewater collection system to ensure trouble-free service for our customers. Our construction projects may cause short-term inconveniences, but they provide long-term benefits for you and your neighbors. We appreciate your understanding!

Here's what we're currently working on (estimated completion dates in parentheses).

**DOWNTOWN WALNUT CREEK, LOCUST STREET** will replace approximately 1 mile of sewers within the Locust Street area of downtown Walnut Creek from Mt. Diablo Boulevard to Giammona Drive, including cross streets. **(June/July 2024)**

**LAFAYETTE, PHASE 15** will replace approximately 2.5 miles of sewers in the Happy Valley, Deer Hill, Lafayette Hills, Downtown, and Trails neighborhoods of Lafayette. **(January 2025)**

**SOUTH ORINDA, PHASE 9** will replace approximately 2.0 miles of sewers primarily in Overhill Road, Scenic Drive, Valley Drive, Leslee Lane, and Lavenida Drive, as well as various locations in Orinda, south of Interstate 24. **(February 2025)**

**PUMPING STATION UPGRADES, PHASE 2** will replace/retrofit 3 pumping stations in Martinez. **(December 2025)**

**MARTINEZ URGENT FORCE MAIN REPLACEMENT** will replace approximately 1,400 linear feet of 20-inch sewage force mains, including aerial crossings and connections to existing structures, in Martinez. **(October 2024)**

To learn more about these or other construction projects, please contact Senior Community Affairs Representative Chris Carpenter at [ccarp@centralsan.org](mailto:ccarp@centralsan.org) or (925) 229-7200, or visit: [centralsan.org/construction](https://centralsan.org/construction)



# SUMMER EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

## HAVE YOU SEEN OUR NEW COVERS?

Central San maintains over 1,500 miles of underground pipes to transport wastewater from homes and businesses across our service area to our treatment plant in Martinez. To help keep our system working well, we also maintain about 36,800 maintenance access covers (a.k.a. “manholes”) and cleanouts that our crews use to access our pipes for regular cleaning and inspections.

To commemorate our 75th anniversary in 2021, we unveiled a new maintenance access cover design that showcases the beauty of our service area and our commitment to protecting public health and the environment. Keep an eye out: As we replace aging covers over time, you might start seeing the new design around your neighborhood!

If you do, snap a photo and send it to us at [avallee@centralsan.org](mailto:avallee@centralsan.org). In return, we'll send you one of our handy drink coasters featuring the new design—perfect for holding your beverage on warm summer days. Send your photo by September 3, 2024, and you'll also be entered into a drawing for an Earth-friendly gift card/membership from a local organization. We may even feature your photo on our social media channels or in a future issue of *Pipeline!*



SNAP A PHOTO,  
WIN A PRIZE!



## TAKE A DEEP DIVE INTO THE WORLD OF WASTEWATER

Ever wondered what happens to your dirty water after it disappears down the drain? Our award-winning citizens' academy, Central San Academy, offers an in-depth exploration of the world of wastewater. Join us as we delve into the work we do, from preventing pollution to constructing capital projects, recycling water, piloting new technologies, and much more. Plus, you'll also have a chance to explore career pathways in the industry and meet like-minded community members who share your curiosity and passion for protecting the environment.

Join us this summer in San Ramon!

Our 2024 session runs June 25 to July 16 at the Roundhouse Conference Center in San Ramon. We'll meet for four Tuesday evening sessions as well as a tour of our facilities in Martinez. As our thanks for spending your time with us, we'll even provide a light meal at each meeting. Central San Academy is free and open to anyone 18 years or older, but space is limited. The application period closes on June 11. To learn more, visit: [centralsan.org/academy](https://centralsan.org/academy)



## GO WITH THE FLOW BICYCLE TOURS

For 21 miles, the Iron Horse Trail and bicycling path follows one of Central San's sewer lines—from one corner of our service area in San Ramon nearly all the way to our treatment plant in Martinez. Central San is now offering free guided bicycling tours that follow portions of this trail and the wastewater infrastructure along the way.

Come out and join us as we enjoy the warmer weather and learn more about the wastewater system that helps keep our community clean and healthy. Enjoy a fun group ride as we discover what's happening just below our wheels!

**Who is the tour for? How do I register?**

If you have a bicycle and are able to ride 12 miles (flat with lots of stops), this tour's for you! All ages are welcome, but kids under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Parents with cargo bikes are welcome to bring little kids in tow. For more information, including upcoming tour dates, full tour routes, and how to register, visit: [centralsan.org/bike](https://centralsan.org/bike)



## TREATMENT PLANT TOUR

Wednesday, July 10, 4:00 p.m.

Join us for a guided walking tour of our wastewater treatment plant in Martinez and see firsthand how we clean millions of gallons of wastewater every single day. For more information and to register, visit: [centralsan.org/tours](https://centralsan.org/tours)

We also offer custom tours for your group of 12 or more. To learn more, please contact Ben Lavender at (925) 335-7723 or [blavender@centralsan.org](mailto:blavender@centralsan.org).



# HOW TO HAVE A HAPPY GARDEN

## (WITH FEWER CHEMICALS)

Many commonly used pesticides can be harmful not only to people and pets, but also to our garden ecosystems and local waterways. Luckily, there are many ways to maintain a beautiful and healthy garden without resorting to toxic chemicals. Here are some of our favorite green gardening tips:

### TRY ECO-FRIENDLY FIRST

Whenever possible, choose physical or biological controls rather than chemical pesticides. For example: Use mulch to control weeds. Protect plants with gopher wire or fabric row covers that keep out pests while letting in light and water. Plant a variety of flowering plants to attract beneficial insects like ladybugs and lacewings. And maintain a healthy garden (for instance, by not overwatering) that naturally stands up to pests.

### CHOOSE LESS TOXIC

If your garden does have a pest problem, there are many less-toxic products that can help. Check out the free fact sheets from Our Water, Our World ([ourwaterourworld.org](http://ourwaterourworld.org)) to find solutions for your situation. If you must use pesticides as a last resort, do your research so you know which pest and life stage you're dealing with. Choose the least toxic product targeted to your specific pest and use only what you need for the job.

### DISPOSE SAFELY

Cleaning out your garden shed or garage? Never dispose of unwanted pesticides or garden products down the sewer or storm drain. Instead, bring them to our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility for reuse, recycling, or safe disposal.

### BONUS TIP: WATER WITH RECYCLED

Keep your garden happy while helping save precious drinking water supplies! Central San offers recycled water at no charge for our residential customers—ideal for hand-watering trees, flowers, lawns, and container plants. The Residential Recycled Water Fill Station is **located behind our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility** (see map). To learn more about how to use the fill station, visit: [centralsan.org/recycledwater](http://centralsan.org/recycledwater)



# GOT RV TRAVEL PLANS THIS SUMMER?

If you're hitting the road in your RV this summer, make sure to plan a stop at Central San's RV waste disposal station! The self-service station is open daily and provides a convenient, no-cost way to empty your RV tanks and safely dispose of the wastewater. By properly disposing of your RV waste, you can help us protect our local waterways and public health.

## RV WASTE DISPOSAL STATION

5300 IMHOFF DRIVE, MARTINEZ, CA 94553  
[CENTRALSAN.ORG/RV](http://CENTRALSAN.ORG/RV)  
 Open daily, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.



## HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION FACILITY

4797 IMHOFF PLACE, MARTINEZ, CA 94553  
 1-800-646-1431 OR [CENTRALSAN.ORG/HHW](http://CENTRALSAN.ORG/HHW)

- RESIDENTS:** Monday–Saturday, 7 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- BUSINESSES:** Monday–Saturday, by appointment
- REUSE ROOM:** Monday–Saturday, 7 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
- RECYCLED WATER FILL STATION:** Monday–Saturday, 7 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
 (May close during periods of rain; please call ahead: 925-335-7717)
- HOLIDAY CLOSURES:** May 27, June 19, July 4, September 2, November 11

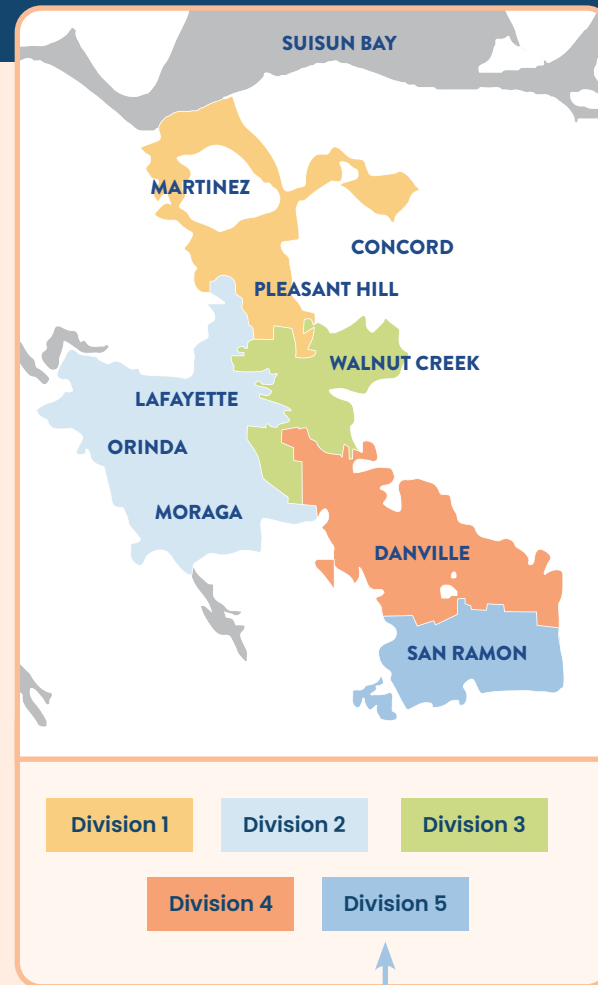
# FIND YOUR BOARD DIVISION

As an independent special district, Central San is governed by a five-member elected Board of Directors. In 2020, Central San transitioned from an "at-large" election system to an area-based "by-division" election system under the California Voting Rights Act. In 2021, the division boundaries were redrawn based on 2020 Census data to reflect the changing populations of our service area.

Divisions 1, 3, 4, and 5 will be up for election during the general election on Tuesday, November 5, 2024. Divisions 2 and 3\* will be up for election in November 2026.

To find your Board division, visit Central San's elections page for an interactive map: [centralsan.org/elections](https://centralsan.org/elections)

**Under the new boundaries, Division 5 (San Ramon area) currently lacks a Board representative.** Central San welcomes residents who are interested in serving the diverse needs and community of Division 5 to run for the Board. To learn more about becoming a candidate, please visit [centralsan.org/elections](https://centralsan.org/elections). Considering running for the Board and want to learn more about Central San? Join our citizens' academy in San Ramon this summer! Read more on page 9.



\*Due to a Board vacancy appointment, Division 3 is up for election in 2024 for a two-year term. In 2026, the seat will be up for election for a standard four-year term.

# STOPPING "FOREVER" CHEMICALS AT THE SOURCE

A new California Senate Bill could be a significant step in safeguarding Californians and our environment from toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The Ending Forever Chemicals Act (SB 903 – Skinner) aims to restrict the sale of products containing PFAS in the state, except when the use of PFAS is necessary for the product to work and no safer alternative is available.

PFAS are human-made chemicals widely used in manufacturing and industry. Known for their strong chemical bonds, PFAS can build up in the environment and our bodies over time, harming the planet and our health. Studies have shown exposure to PFAS may lead to increased cancer risk, developmental delays in children, and interference with the body's natural hormones and immune response.

Once PFAS enter the environment, there is no simple way to remove them, which is why they are commonly known as "forever" chemicals. Due to the widespread use of PFAS, scientists have found these

troublesome pollutants all over the globe, in water, air, soil, animals, and people.

California has been at the forefront of efforts to limit the use of PFAS in many everyday products. In the past few years, the state passed legislation to ban the use of PFAS in most food packaging, cosmetics, textiles, and children's cribs and playpens. However, PFAS are still found in countless products manufactured or sold in the state. SB 903 aims to eliminate the unnecessary use of PFAS in such products, reducing the flow of PFAS into our homes and environment.

While there is much we don't know about managing PFAS pollution, one thing is sure: The best solution is prevention at the source, by keeping PFAS out of products and the environment to begin with. That's why Central San supports SB 903 and other efforts to limit the use of PFAS where safer alternatives are available. Along with our partners across the state, we'll continue to push for smart solutions for managing these harmful chemicals.

# DO YOU HAVE TENANTS?

Our kitchen/bathroom tips cards are packed with valuable information that can help protect your plumbing and decrease property damage caused by sewage back-ups. If you're a property manager or landlord, these cards are perfect for sharing with your tenants or posting in common areas. For free copies, please contact Ann Vallee at (925) 335-7721 or [avallee@centralsan.org](mailto:avallee@centralsan.org).

## CLOG CULPRITS: DON'T PUT THESE DOWN TOILETS & DRAINS



# EXPLORING THE TREATMENT PLANT

Whenever you flush your toilet or wash your hands, the dirty water flows to Central San's treatment plant for cleaning. You might be surprised that it takes a bunch of steps to make wastewater clean and safe again!

As the wastewater travels through the plant, it goes to the **primary settling tanks** where the solids in the water settle out. Heavy stuff sinks to the bottom, light stuff rises to the top.

Next, the water goes through the **secondary treatment tanks**, which are filled with bubbling air. The abundant oxygen supports millions of tiny microorganisms (or "bugs") that break down pollutants in the water.

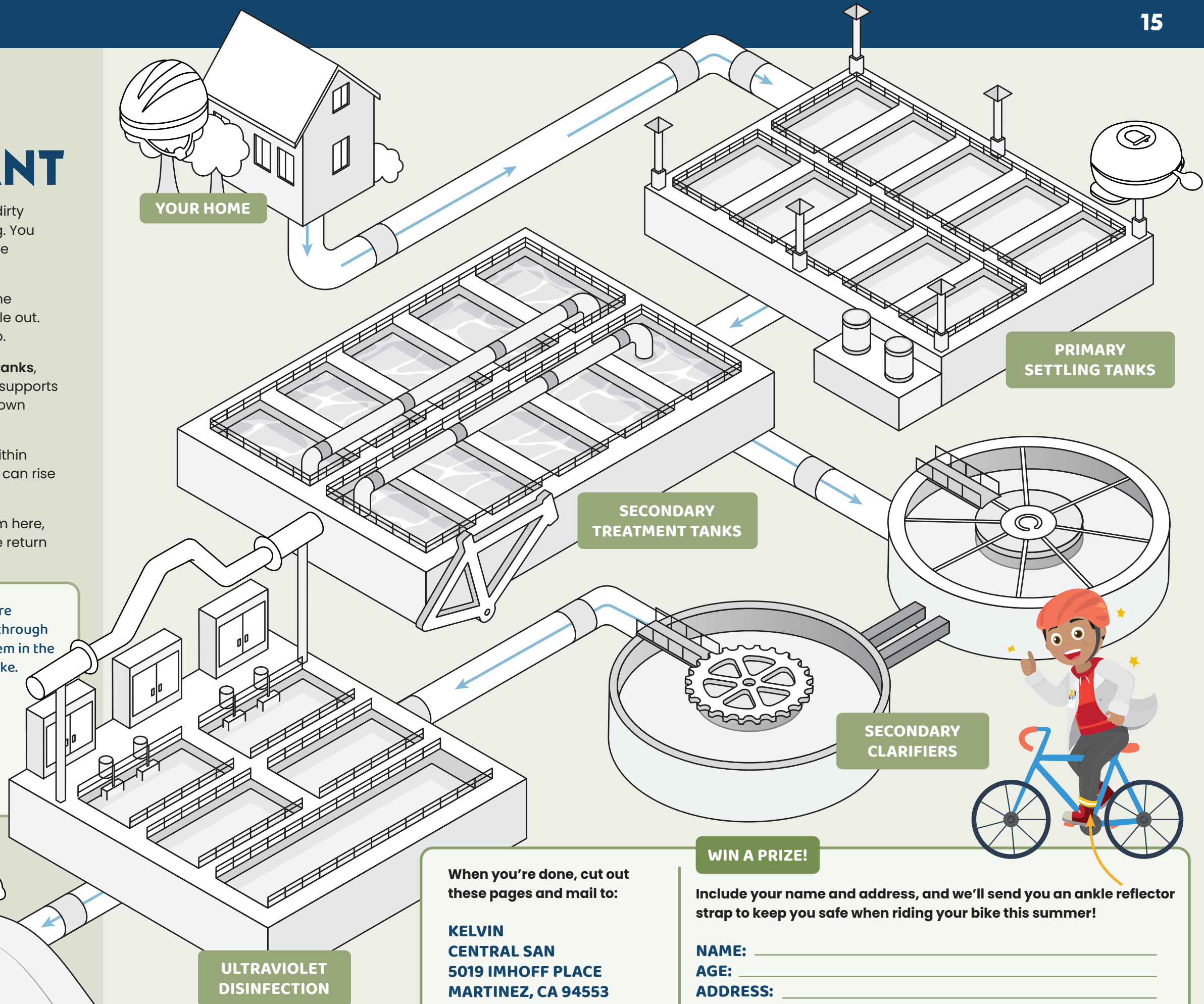
Then, the water continues to the **secondary clarifiers**. Within these circular tanks, the "bugs" settle out so clean water can rise to the surface.

Finally, the water is disinfected with **ultraviolet light**. From here, most of the cleaned water flows to Suisun Bay, where we return it safely to the environment.

Can you help Kelvin recover the missing bike parts that are hidden in the treatment plant? Follow the flow of water through the plant to find the items on the list below and circle them in the picture. Then, color the rest of the picture however you like.

## BIKE PARTS:

- BIKE FRAME
- GEAR
- HELMET
- HANDLEBARS
- BIKE WHEEL
- BIKE BELL



When you're done, cut out these pages and mail to:

**KELVIN  
CENTRAL SAN  
5019 IMHOFF PLACE  
MARTINEZ, CA 94553**

### WIN A PRIZE!

Include your name and address, and we'll send you an ankle reflector strap to keep you safe when riding your bike this summer!

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 AGE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

SUISUN BAY

ULTRAVIOLET DISINFECTION

SECONDARY TREATMENT TANKS

PRIMARY SETTLING TANKS

SECONDARY CLARIFIERS



## WE ARE HERE TO HELP

General Information	(925) 228-9500 or <a href="http://CentralSan.org">CentralSan.org</a>
Sewer Overflows	(925) 933-0990
Household Hazardous Waste InfoLine	(800) 646-1431 or <a href="http://CentralSan.org/HHW">CentralSan.org/HHW</a>
Recycled Water Fill Station InfoLine	(925) 335-7717
Sewer connection permits/Permit Counter	(925) 229-7371
Community Information Line	(925) 335-7702
Student Education Programs	(925) 335-7723 or <a href="http://CentralSan.org/Learn">CentralSan.org/Learn</a>
Environmental Compliance	(925) 229-7288
Report illegal discharges into sewer system	(925) 229-7288 (during business hours); (925) 229-7214 (after hours)
Treatment Plant InfoLine (Report Odors)	(925) 335-7703
Employment Opportunities	<a href="http://CentralSan.org/Careers">CentralSan.org/Careers</a>



**Central San serves nearly half a million customers within its 146-square-mile service area.**

- Wastewater collection & treatment; Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) disposal.
- Wastewater treatment & HHW disposal in Concord & Clayton by contract.
- HHW disposal only.

● Central San headquarters, treatment plant, HHW Facility & Residential Recycled Water Fill Station.

### The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District PIPELINE

Written and designed by Central San staff to communicate pollution prevention messages to the people and communities we serve.

Ann Vallée, Editor, Writer  
Kelsey Lansang, Graphic Designer  
Joseph Zumbo, Photographer


View archived issues at [CentralSan.org](http://CentralSan.org)


PIPELINE is printed with soy-based inks on Recycled Paper


Please share or recycle this newsletter.


Board meetings are open to the public and are usually held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 2:30 p.m. in the Central San Board Room, 5019 Imhoff Place, Martinez. Meetings can be live-streamed at [centralsan.org](http://centralsan.org)


### CONNECT WITH US!

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 [centralsan.org/nextdoor](http://centralsan.org/nextdoor)

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