

**BUILDING OUR
FUTURE**
PAGE 4

**NUTRIENTS
UPDATE**
PAGES 8-9

**WHAT TO KNOW
ABOUT PFAS**
PAGE 12

INVESTING IN TOMORROW



GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE: FULFILLING OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR CUSTOMERS

Central San is proud to be your local sewer service provider, protecting public health and the environment for nearly 80 years.

Every time you wash your dishes or clothes, flush your toilet, or use your sinks, bathtub, and shower, it's our job to collect and clean all that dirty water. Our dedicated team maintains over 1,500 miles of underground pipe and 18 pumping stations to transport wastewater from our customers' homes and businesses to our regional treatment plant in Martinez, where we clean more than 13 billion gallons of wastewater every year.

We take our work very seriously, but we can't do it alone. You, our customers, provide us with the funding necessary to deliver safe and reliable sewer services every hour of every day. We are grateful for the trust you have placed in us. In return, we are committed to providing exceptional service at reasonable rates.

At Central San, we continually strive to control costs and do everything we can to keep rates affordable. Some recent steps we've taken include:

- Secured low-cost state financing to save \$20 million in interest costs on large-scale projects
- Maintained AAA (S&P) and Aa1 (Moody's) credit ratings to keep borrowing costs low
- Benchmark performance annually to ensure efficient, cost-effective operations
- Recovered \$1.8 million in COVID-19 response costs from State and Federal funds
- Fully funded pension liabilities, saving millions in ongoing interest costs

As we look to the future, however, we recognize that additional investments are needed to replace aging infrastructure, meet strict new regulatory requirements, and sustain the high level of service you expect and deserve. Recently, we mailed detailed information to all property owners regarding proposed rate changes for the upcoming two years. **Central San's Board of Directors will consider the proposed rates at a public hearing on April 17, 2025, at 2:30 p.m. at our headquarters at 5019 Imhoff Place in Martinez.**

We invite and encourage you to attend the public hearing. Additional information about the proposed rate changes is available on our website at centralsan.org/notice. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call our Community Information Line at (925) 335-7702. In this issue of *Pipeline*, you can read more about where your rate dollars go, including current and future projects that are preparing us to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Thank you again for your support and trust.



Roger S. Bailey
General Manager

YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK

Through proactive maintenance, we've extended the lifespan of our facilities and equipment to make every dollar go further for our customers. However, as parts of our system reach the end of their useful lives, we are investing in upgrades to ensure safe, efficient, reliable service. Over the past two years, we've worked hard to complete several significant infrastructure improvement projects:

PIPES

We replaced more than 6 miles of aging neighborhood sewer pipes throughout our service area.



STEAM AND AERATION BLOWER SYSTEMS

We installed new high-speed electric blowers to provide full backup for these essential systems.



AERATION BASINS

We completed the first phase of renovations to our aeration basins. These giant tanks provide an oxygen-rich environment for beneficial microorganisms that consume and break down pollutants in wastewater.



RECYCLED WATER

We completed the first phase of renovations to our recycled water plant, which will ensure continued reliability of our recycled water system and support expanded capacity for the future.



PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

As we look ahead, our key priorities include replacing aging infrastructure, meeting new regulatory requirements, and enhancing environmental sustainability—all while continuing to provide exceptional, uninterrupted service.

This past year, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board introduced new regulations requiring all Bay Area wastewater agencies to reduce nitrogen discharges by 40% within a decade. Achieving the mandated reductions will require the largest simultaneous public investment in treatment upgrades across our region since the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972. Central San is exploring innovative solutions to help us meet the new requirements, and reprioritizing other projects to control overall costs and minimize rate impacts to our customers.

The proposed rate changes will provide the necessary funding for these critical projects scheduled for the next two years.

- 1 **NUTRIENT REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS ROADMAP:** We will develop a comprehensive roadmap to guide our nutrient-management efforts over the next ten years. This will allow us to coordinate, plan, design, and construct multiple large-scale projects in the most effective and cost-efficient manner utilizing rate increases and debt financing. Additionally, we will continue to explore and test cutting-edge technologies that could help achieve the Regional Water Quality Control Board's required reductions at a lower cost compared to conventional technologies (read more on pages 8–9).
- 2 **PIPES AND PUMPING STATIONS:** We will replace about 12 miles of aging neighborhood sewer pipes to ensure reliable service for decades to come. We will also complete improvements to three large pumping stations that are essential for the continuous delivery of wastewater from the Martinez area to our treatment plant.
- 3 **LARGE SEWER INSPECTIONS:** We will continue condition assessments of our large sewers and force mains to plan for future repairs. Measuring up to 8.5 feet in diameter, these pipes convey wastewater from neighborhoods throughout our service area.
- 4 **SOLIDS HANDLING:** We will continue work on a large-scale, multi-year rehabilitation of our solids handling facilities, including seismic upgrades and replacement of aging equipment. The project will ensure reliable ongoing processing of wastewater solids and compliance with strict air quality regulations.
- 5 **AERATION BASINS:** We will begin the second phase of renovations to our aeration basins to improve seismic reliability, enhance efficiency, and prolong the lifespan of these critical facilities.
- 6 **ENERGY EFFICIENCY ROADMAP:** We will assess current and future energy needs and develop a comprehensive and sustainable energy strategy for powering our operations while minimizing costs and climate impacts.



NEIGHBORHOOD UPGRADES

Central San regularly maintains, repairs, and 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 start/completion dates in parentheses)

- **LAFAYETTE, PHASE 15** will replace approximately 1.8 miles of sewers in the Happy Valley, Deer Hill, Lafayette Hills, Downtown, and Trails neighborhoods of Lafayette. (Current - November 2025)
- **PLEASANT HILL, PHASE 3** will replace approximately 1.8 miles of sewers primarily in the Gregory Gardens subdivision of Pleasant Hill. (Current - November 2025)
- **BUCHANAN LIFT STATIONS ABANDONMENT AND SEWER PROJECT** will replace 1.0 miles of sewers, while also decommissioning two aging pumping stations on John Glenn Drive and sewer mains crossing the Buchanan Field Airport in Concord. (Current - December 2025)
- **PUMPING STATION UPGRADES, PHASE 2** will replace/retrofit three pumping stations in Martinez. (Current - December 2025)
- **PLEASANT HILL, PHASE 4** will replace approximately 1.8 miles of sewers primarily in the Gregory Gardens subdivision of Pleasant Hill. (June 2025 - March 2026)
- **NORTH ORINDA, PHASE 9** will replace approximately 1.9 miles of sewers primarily in Tappan Lane, Brookbank Road, Lombardy Lane, Mariposa Lane, El Dorado Lane, Las Cascadas Road, and Linda Vista, as well as various locations in Orinda, north of Interstate 24. (August 2025 - March 2026)

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

YOUR SEWER SERVICE PROVIDER ... AND SO MUCH MORE!

In addition to collecting and cleaning your wastewater, Central San offers a variety of services to help our customers prevent pollution, conserve water, and learn more about where your wastewater goes. Best of all, all of these services are FREE for our residential customers. **Come visit us!**

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION FACILITY

4797 IMHOFF PLACE, MARTINEZ
CENTRALSAN.ORG/HHW • (800) 646-1431
RESIDENTS: Monday – Saturday, 7 a.m. – 2 p.m.
BUSINESSES: Monday – Saturday, by appointment

Bring us your unwanted paint, oil, pesticides, batteries, fluorescent light bulbs, and other household hazardous waste—and we'll take care of the rest! Every pound of waste brought to our collection facility helps keep pollutants out of sewers, storm drains, and landfills. Even better, we reuse or recycle nearly 90% of the materials we collect.

REUSE ROOM

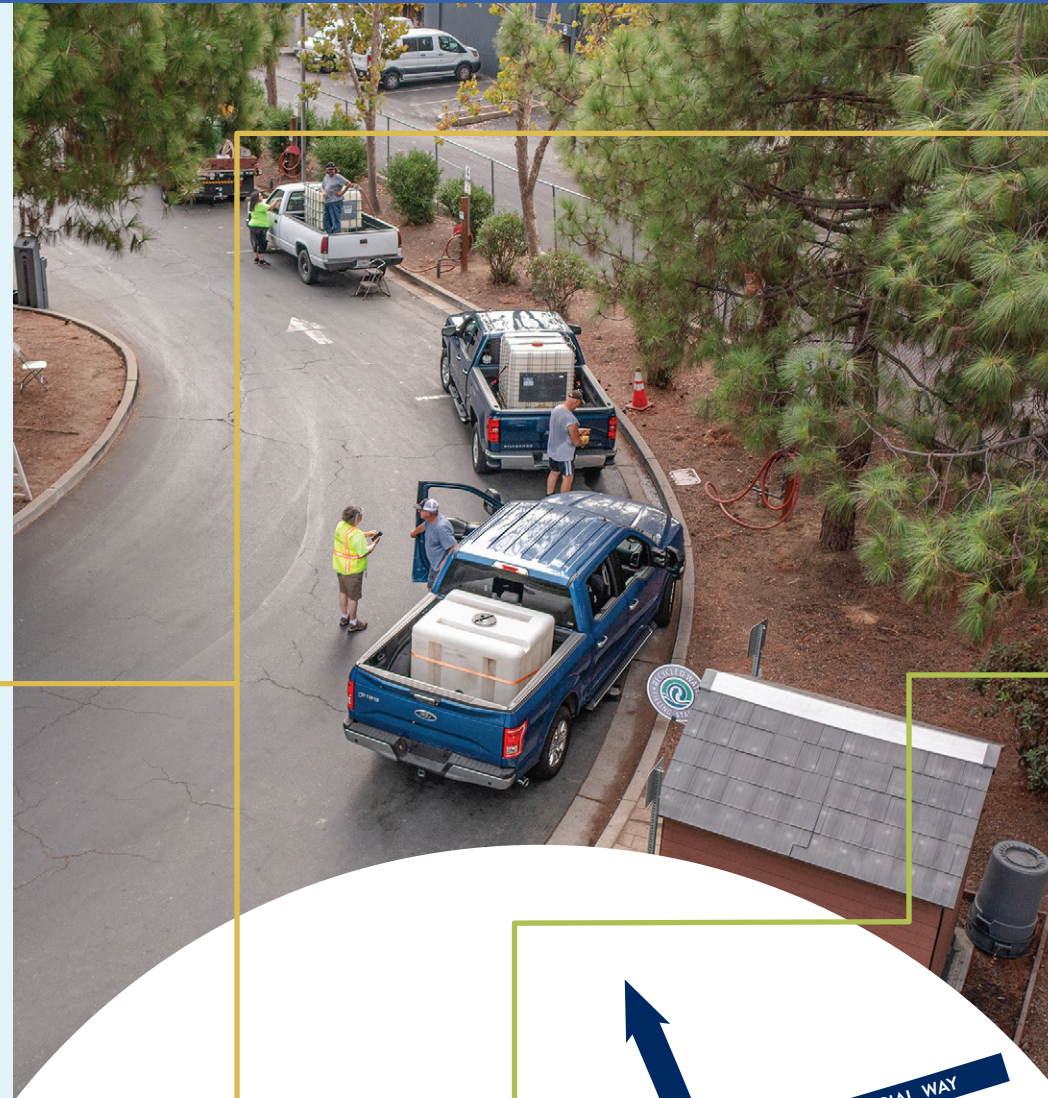
4797 IMHOFF PLACE, MARTINEZ
Monday – Saturday, 7 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Our Reuse Room is stocked with items brought in for disposal that are still in usable condition. The inventory changes regularly but often includes paint, wood stain, garden products, and a wide variety of cleaners. Drop in, browse, and you might find just what you need.

CONNECT WITH US!

Follow Central San for upcoming tours and events, pollution prevention tips, news, photos, and more.

-  @centralsandist
-  @centralsandist
-  @centralsandist
-  centralsan.org/nextdoor



RESIDENTIAL RECYCLED WATER FILL STATION

4797 IMHOFF PLACE, MARTINEZ
CENTRALSAN.ORG/RECYCLEDWATER • (925) 335-7717
Monday – Saturday, 7 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Closed during periods of rain; please call ahead to confirm we're open.)

Keep your garden happy while helping save our precious drinking water supplies! Our recycled water is ideal for hand-watering your trees, flowers, lawns, and container plants. Visit our website for step-by-step instructions on how to use the fill station.

RV WASTE DISPOSAL STATION

5300 IMHOFF DRIVE, MARTINEZ
CENTRALSAN.ORG/RV
Open 24 hours daily

Our self-service recreational vehicle (RV) waste disposal station 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.

PUBLIC TOURS

CENTRALSAN.ORG/TOURS • (925) 335-7723
BLAVENDER@CENTRALSAN.ORG

Curious how we do what we do? 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. Or, grab your bike and “go with the flow” on a family-friendly bicycling tour following our wastewater infrastructure along the Iron Horse Trail. Visit our website for details about all our upcoming tours, and register today!



EXPLORING AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION FOR NITROGEN REMOVAL

Last year, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board introduced new regulations requiring all Bay Area wastewater agencies to cut nitrogen discharges by 40% from 2022 levels by 2034. Meeting this stringent regulation will require significant upgrades to treatment facilities across our region, at an estimated price tag for Bay Area residents of \$11–13 billion.

To help meet this challenge, Central San has been pilot testing cutting-edge wastewater treatment technology that could help us meet the new regulations at a lower cost compared to conventional technologies. To achieve a 40% nitrogen reduction using conventional treatment processes, we would need to build expensive new aeration basins and clarifiers. However, Membrane Aerated Biofilm Reactor (MABR) technology offers an exciting possibility for process intensification—that is, achieving more treatment within our existing aeration basins.

Our aeration basins provide an oxygen-rich habitat for millions of beneficial microorganisms that break down pollutants in wastewater. However, to increase nitrogen removal, we need these microorganisms to linger longer in the treatment process. MABR technology uses gas-permeable, hollow membranes to deliver oxygen directly to a thin layer of microorganisms, called a biofilm. This biofilm provides an ideal environment to support a diverse microbial community that can efficiently remove nitrogen.

Thousands of these gas-permeable membranes are housed together in 7-foot cassettes that can be installed in our existing aeration basins. The modular nature of the cassettes provides the flexibility to expand treatment capacity as needed to meet future demands or regulatory changes. Additionally, the MABR process is much more energy-efficient than traditional nitrogen removal technologies, aligning with Central San's sustainability goals.



This past year, we conducted a seven-month pilot project to help determine how much nitrogen removal MABR could help Central San achieve in our existing basins. We are pleased to report that the MABR technology performed well under a variety of conditions.

The pilot's success has drawn attention from other wastewater utilities across the region. Central San has actively shared the findings of the pilot project by hosting two recent tours: one for members of the California Water Environment Association (CWEA) and another for representatives from Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA). The project was further recognized with the 2024–25 Dr. Jenkins Research Achievement Award from the CWEA's San Francisco Bay Section.

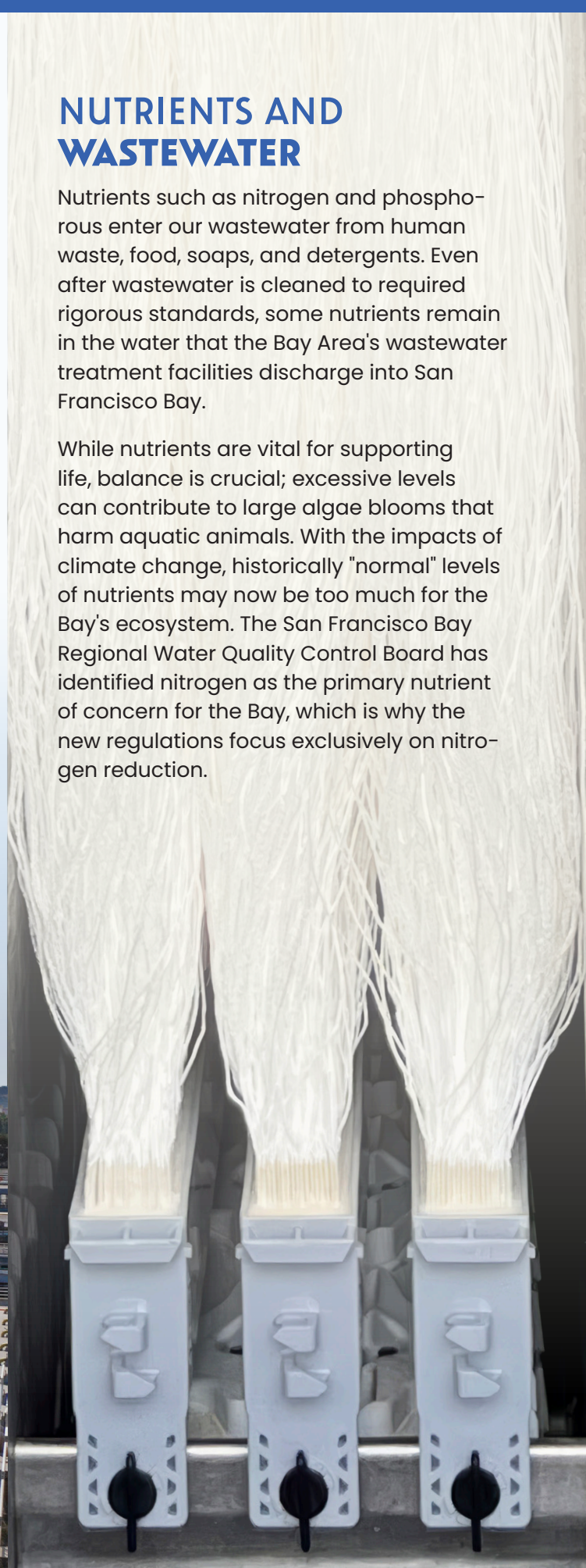
Given the encouraging results of the pilot test, we're optimistic about the potential of MABR technology to help us "do more with less" by minimizing the need for expensive new infrastructure while enhancing environmental protection. What's next? Building on the promising pilot results, Central San plans to perform a large-scale demonstration testing of the MABR technology. This will be followed by a comprehensive cost analysis to evaluate the feasibility of implementing the technology on a full scale. **Stay tuned for updates!**



NUTRIENTS AND WASTEWATER

Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous enter our wastewater from human waste, food, soaps, and detergents. Even after wastewater is cleaned to required rigorous standards, some nutrients remain in the water that the Bay Area's wastewater treatment facilities discharge into San Francisco Bay.

While nutrients are vital for supporting life, balance is crucial; excessive levels can contribute to large algae blooms that harm aquatic animals. With the impacts of climate change, historically "normal" levels of nutrients may now be too much for the Bay's ecosystem. The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board has identified nitrogen as the primary nutrient of concern for the Bay, which is why the new regulations focus exclusively on nitrogen reduction.



3 TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR SEWER LATERAL IN TIPTOP SHAPE

While Central San is responsible for maintaining our more than 1,500 miles of public sewer pipes, property owners are responsible for maintaining their private sewer laterals. The private sewer lateral (also called a side sewer) is the pipe that connects your household or business plumbing to our sewer system.

Each property owner is responsible for their entire lateral up to and including the point where it connects to the public sewer main. This includes the portion of the lateral on your property, as well as any portion located beneath the sidewalk and street.

There are a few simple steps you can take to help your lateral do its job:

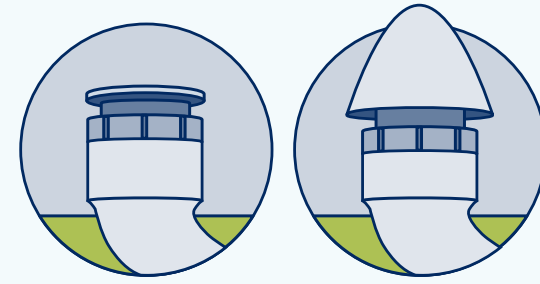
1. TEND TO YOUR ROOTS

Root intrusion is the leading cause of sewer back-ups. Keep your private sewer lateral clean and clear by planting trees and shrubs away from the pipe. If there are trees near your lateral, consider having it inspected/cleaned by a professional plumbing service every other year.

2. KEEP YOUR PIPES FREE OF CLOG CULPRITS

In the kitchen, keep fats, oils, and grease out of the drain. Compost food scraps rather than putting them down the garbage disposal.

In the bathroom, flush only human waste and toilet paper. Never flush wipes, period products, dental floss, condoms, kitty litter, or other plastic or debris. Put them in the trash can.

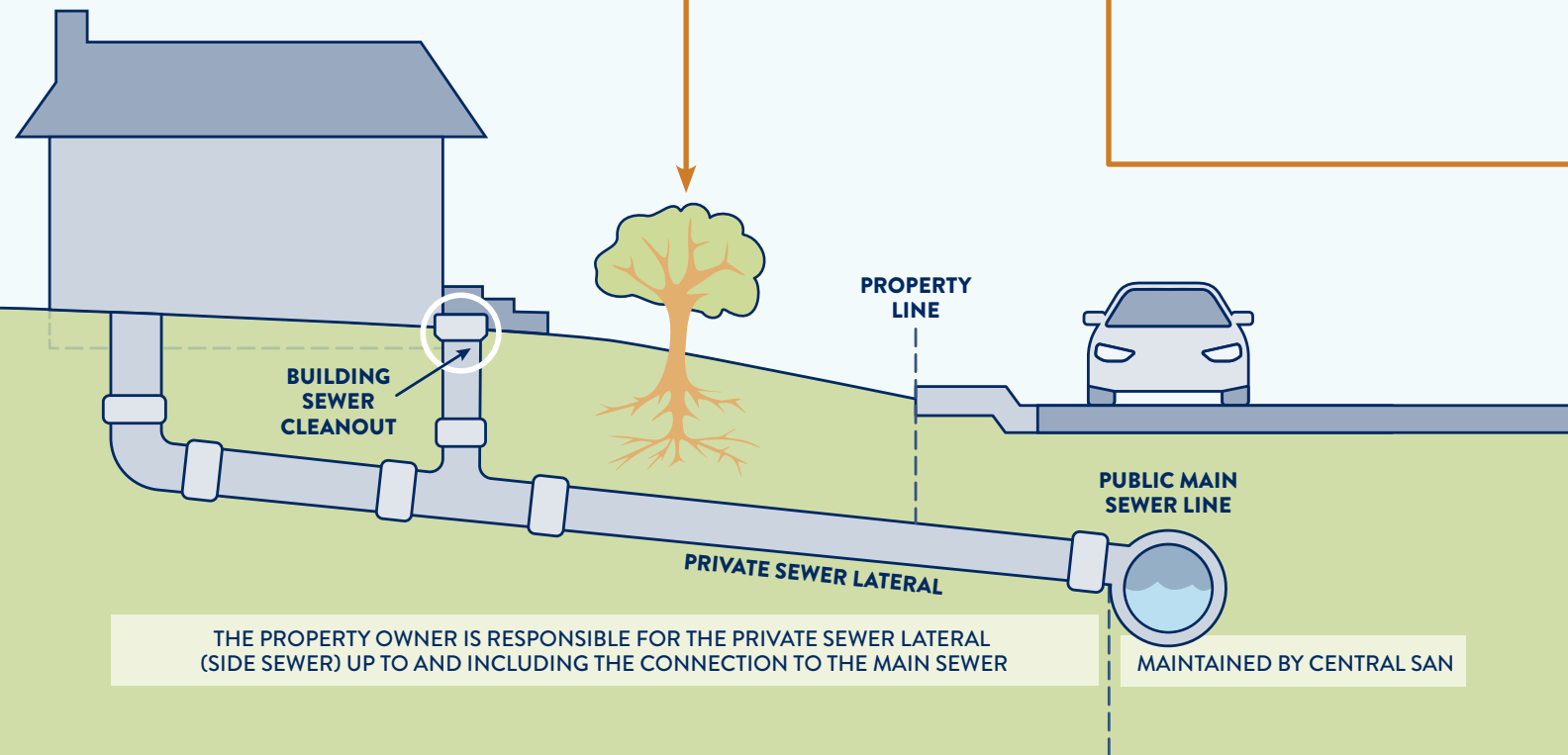


THE TWO MOST COMMON TYPES OF SEWER POPPERS (OVERFLOW PROTECTION DEVICES) SHOWN ON CLEANOUT

3. INSTALL A SEWER POPPER ON THE CLEANOUT OF YOUR PRIVATE LATERAL

A sewer popper (also called an overflow protection device, or OPD) provides cost-effective protection against the mess and expense of a sewer backup by directing the overflow outside your home rather than inside. You can find these inexpensive devices at your local plumbing supply or hardware store. We recommend that you have a licensed plumber install your sewer popper since elevation and location are critical for proper function. Once it is installed, be sure to keep the device clear of obstructions that might interfere with its operation, such as dirt or vegetation.

Note that a sewer popper will not help if a clog occurs between it and the house drains, so keep your pipes free of clog culprits (see #2).



REPLACE YOUR SEWER LATERAL WITH LOW-COST FINANCING

When private sewer laterals fail, repairs and cleanup can be expensive and unpleasant. Defective laterals can cause clogs, resulting in sewage backups in your home and yard. They also allow groundwater and rainwater to leak into the sewer system, contributing to overflows and other issues. Replacing an aging or failing lateral provides greater reliability as well as peace of mind.

Central San's Sewer Lateral Replacement program can help you manage costs if you need to replace your lateral or separate a shared lateral. This program offers low-cost financing to help you pay for construction costs and application/inspection fees related to a lateral replacement.

Single-family residential customers with a 4-inch connection can finance up to \$12,500, while multi-family residential and non-residential customers with a 6-inch connection can finance up to \$25,000. Costs can be conveniently repaid in annual installments over a 15-year term via the Contra Costa County Property Tax Roll.

Visit our website to learn more about our Sewer Lateral Replacement and other financing programs: centralsan.org/financing-programs



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT PFAS

WHAT ARE PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are manmade “forever chemicals” that are harmful to our health and environment.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?





PFAS are widely used in manufacturing and found in many common household products that we use every day. Due to their strong chemical bonds, PFAS can build up in the environment and our bodies over time, causing potential harm.

SOME PRODUCTS THAT MAY CONTAIN PFAS

-  Nonstick cookware
-  Clothing
-  Cosmetics
-  Carpets
-  Dental floss
-  Paint
-  Furniture
-  Cleaning products
-  Shampoo



PFAS & YOUR HEALTH

Numerous health problems have been linked to PFAS:

-  Certain types of cancer
-  Developmental delays in children
-  Altered immune and hormone function
-  Liver damage

PFAS & THE ENVIRONMENT

Scientists have found PFAS pollution all over the globe, including:

-  Air
-  Wildlife
-  Soil
-  People

WHAT CAN WE DO?

There is no easy way to eliminate PFAS in the environment. The best solution is prevention at the source: **Keep PFAS out of products and the environment to start with!**

-  Educate ourselves and others on the dangers of PFAS
-  Urge our favorite brands to stop using PFAS
-  Choose PFAS-free products when possible. Find a list at: pfascentral.org/pfas-free-products

WHAT'S NEXT?

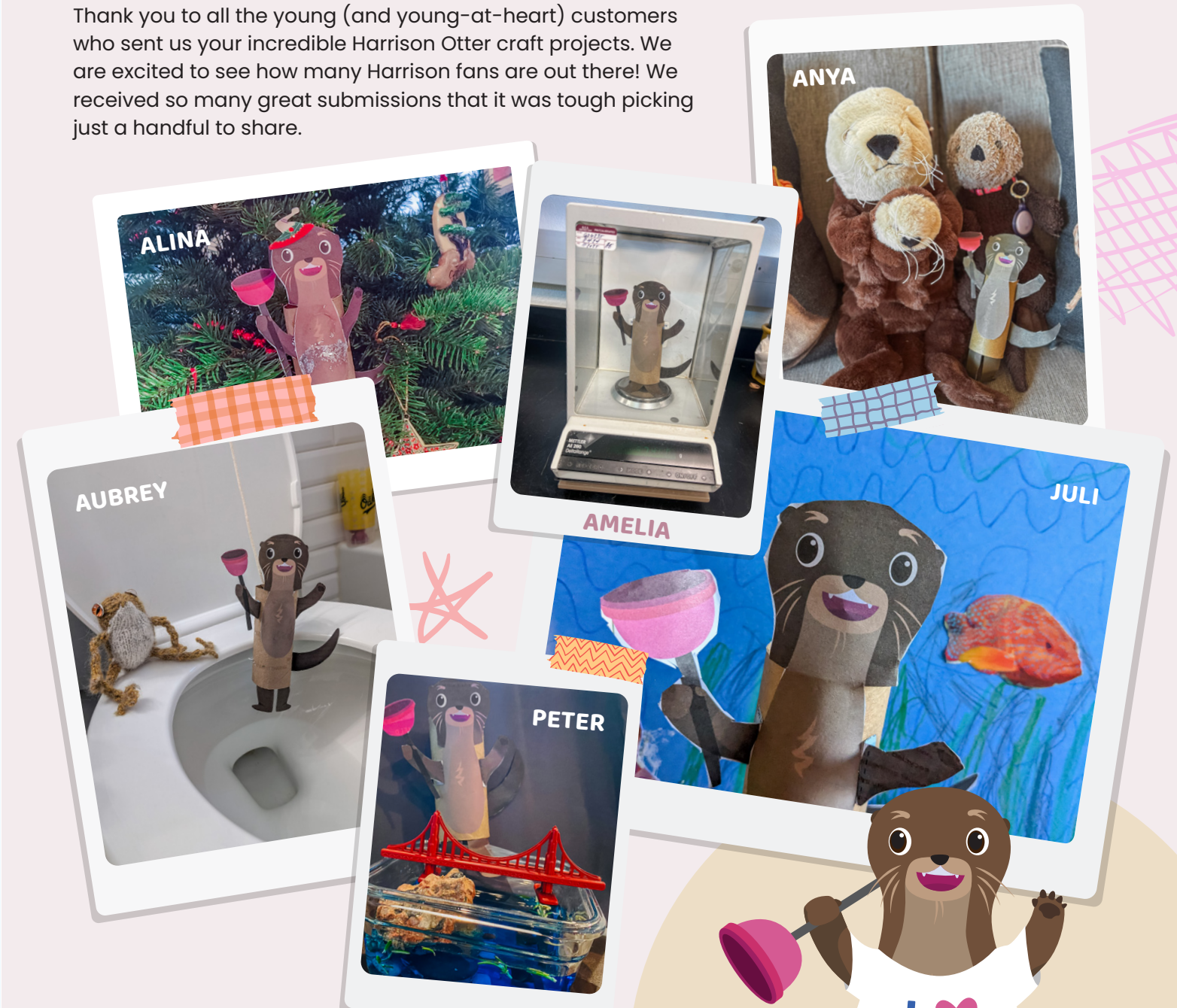
GOOD NEWS: California has taken some important steps to begin phasing out PFAS from many products, including food packaging, textiles, and firefighting foam. This year, the state legislature will consider additional regulations that would phase out all non-essential uses of PFAS for products manufactured or sold in the state. This would go a long way toward protecting Californians and our environment from these pollutants.

Stay tuned!

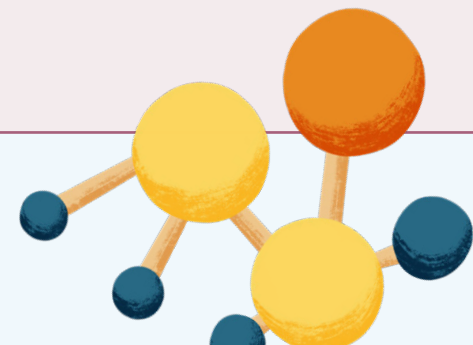
KIDS' PAGE:

HARRISON OTTER FAN CLUB

Thank you to all the young (and young-at-heart) customers who sent us your incredible Harrison Otter craft projects. We are excited to see how many Harrison fans are out there! We received so many great submissions that it was tough picking just a handful to share.



As a proud member of Central San's Pipe Protectors crew, Harrison loves teaching people about the importance of clean water. You can join in this mission, too! Remind your friends and family to keep wipes, trash, pet waste, medications, paints, chemicals, and other pollutants out of toilets and sink drains. Together, we can protect our waterways and provide healthy homes for river otters and other wildlife.



KIDS' PAGE:

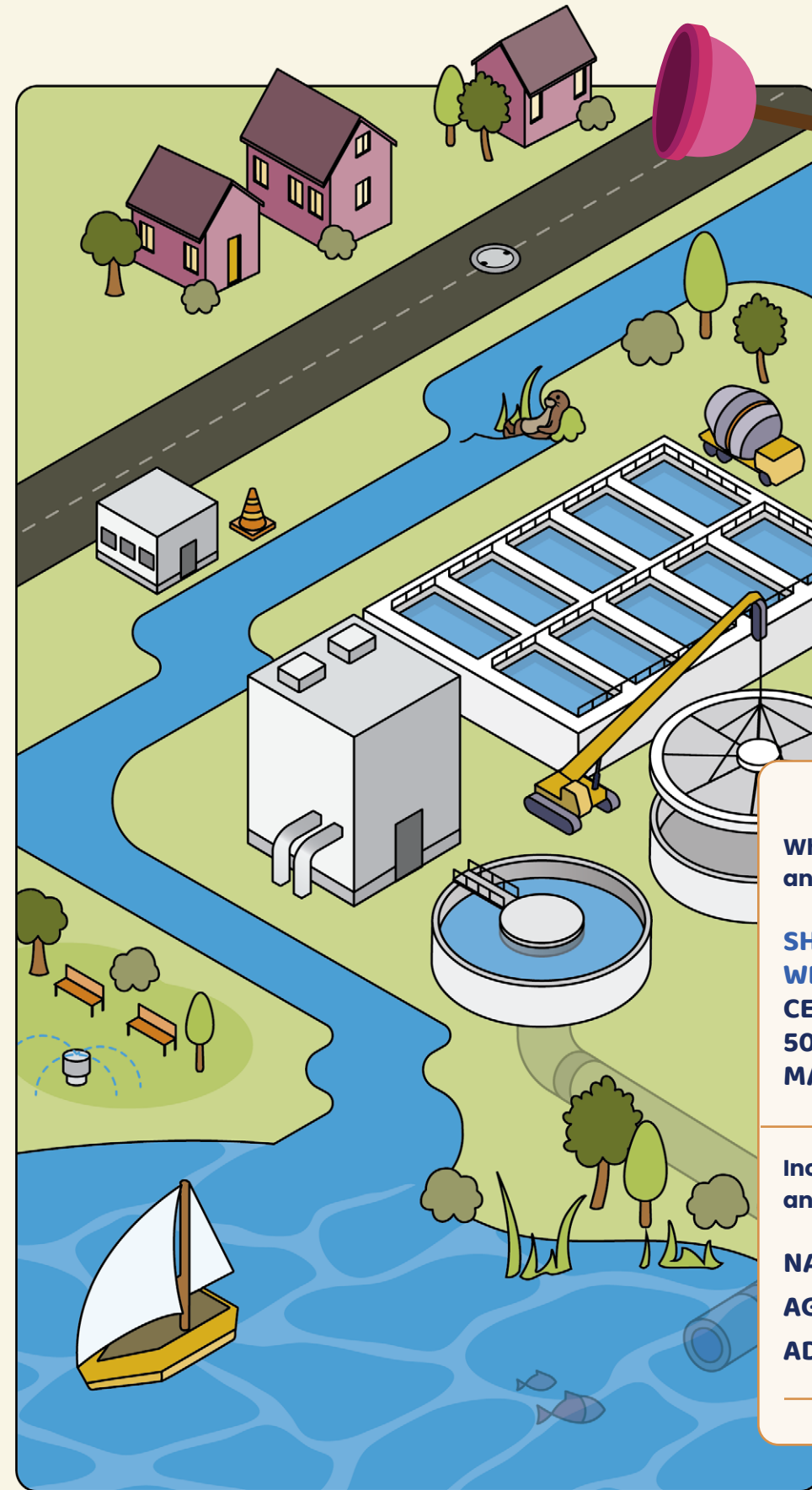
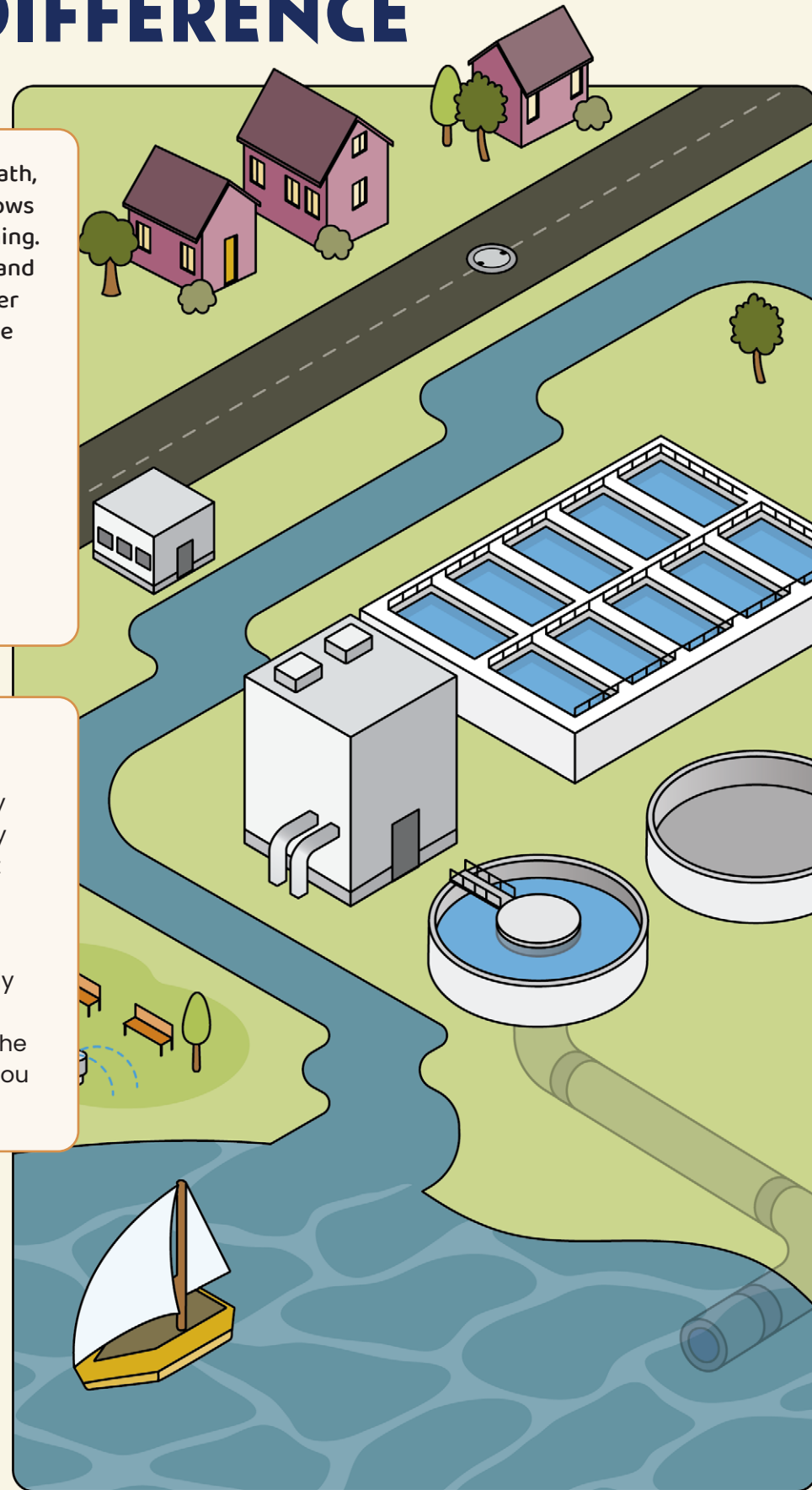
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Whenever you wash your dishes, take a bath, or flush your toilet, all that dirty water flows to Central San's treatment plant for cleaning. We receive millions of gallons every day, and it's our job to make sure all that dirty water is clean and safe before we return it to the environment.

Over time, though, all that dirty water can wear down our equipment. To keep everything running smoothly and efficiently, we are building new and improved equipment. With your help, we can keep our water clean and continue protecting our beautiful planet!

On this page are two pictures of our treatment plant and the surrounding wildlife habitat. At first glance, they may look identical, but one of them is slightly different! It includes many of our recent and planned upgrades.

Can you help Shelly find 9 differences between the two pictures? Look carefully and pay close attention to every detail. When you spot a difference, circle it in the picture on the right. Keep looking until you find them all!



WIN A PRIZE!

When you're done, cut out this page and mail to:

**SHELLY, THE WONDERFUL
WESTERN POND TURTLE
CENTRAL SAN
5019 IMHOFF PLACE
MARTINEZ, CA 94553**

Include your name and address, and we'll send you a prize!

NAME: _____

AGE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

General Information	(925) 228-9500 or CentralSan.org
Sewer Overflows	(925) 933-0990
Household Hazardous Waste InfoLine	(800) 646-1431 or CentralSan.org/HHW
Recycled Water Fill Station InfoLine	(925) 335-7717
Sewer connection permits/Permit Counter	(925) 229-7371
Proposed Rate Changes	(925) 335-7702
Community Information Line	(925) 335-7702
Student Education Programs	(925) 335-7723 or CentralSan.org/Learn
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	CentralSan.org/Careers



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
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



PIPELINE is printed with soy-based inks on recycled paper.