



Purple Pipe

Volume XXII Winter 2020/2021



FEMA Returns \$5.8 million to VVWRA

Final report shows no wrongdoing during Upper Narrows Project

More than three years after appealing a Federal auditor's report alleging mishandling of funds, VVWRA has received a \$5.8 million dollar reimbursement from FEMA for the Upper Narrows emergency and pipeline realignment projects. "This payment is an exoneration of VVWRA and how it handled Federal funds", said VVWRA General Manager Darron Poulsen. "VVWRA contended the grant money was spent legally and in good faith and this payment affirms what we had said all along."

The Upper Narrows pipeline replacement became necessary after a series of storms in December of 2010 knocked out a primary sewer line in the Mojave River. The ensuing temporary bypass and eventual realignment of the sewer line cost about \$42 million dollars. The project was completed in 2016. In 2017, an audit by the Office



of the Inspector General alleged that VVWRA had mishandled a portion of the Federal funding and recommended FEMA disallow \$33.1 million dollars in grant funds. VVWRA vehemently denied the audits findings and appealed.

VVWRA was notified in October of 2020 that our appeal was upheld and checks totaling \$5.8 million from Cal/OES were received December 1. Cal/OES acted as the funding agent for the Federal government on the project. The payment effectively resolves the

lingering financial and legal issues surrounding the Upper Narrows project.

"Integrity is one of our core values at VVWRA", said Poulsen. "I believe this payment will go a long way, in assuring the public that we are good stewards of the resources we use."

VVWRA Honored with the VV Chambers Award of Excellence

VVWRA was recently awarded the Victor Valley Chamber of Commerce Award of Excellence for a large business at the annual awards ceremony held online. VVWRA General Manager Darron Poulsen accepted the award on behalf of our staff who quietly protect public health and the local environment. "Our employees work 24 hours a day every day of the year to assure they properly treat and recycle over 10 1/2 million gallons of wastewater that is produced every day in our region", said Poulsen. "What we do goes unseen by most people, but it is vital to the health and wellbeing of our community." In addition to treating and recycling wastewater, VVWRA is able to provide much of its own power by using the naturally occurring methane or biogas from the waste to generate electricity. Moving forward, VVWRA has partnered with Anaergia Inc. and Southwest Gas on a renewable natural gas project that will convert biogas into commercial grade natural gas. The renewable natural gas will then be injected into a large Southwest Gas pipeline that runs through our plant providing a new source a green energy.



VVWRA General Manager Darron Poulsen accepted the Award of Excellence from Victor Valley Chamber of Commerce Chairman Mark Creffield



VWRA Thanks Outgoing Commissioners

Commissioners Jim Cox and Robert Lovingood thanked for their service

VWRA thanks Commissioners Jim Cox and Robert Lovingood for their years of service to the Authority. The Commissioners presided over their final VWRA Board meeting on November 19th, 2020. Representing the City of Victorville, Commissioner Cox had served on our Board since December of 2018. Supervisor Lovingood, representing CSA 64 (Spring Valley Lake and Oro Grande), had been on our board since July of 2018. Commissioner Cox did not seek re-election to the Victorville City Council and Commissioner Lovingood did not seek re-election to the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors.



New commissioners welcomed to the VWRA Board



Debra Jones



Paul Cook



Bill Holland

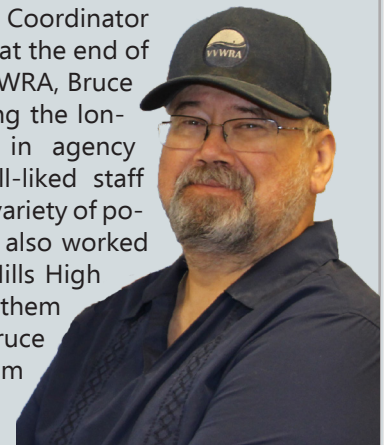
VWRA has welcomed three new commissioners. Newly elected First District Supervisor Paul Cook is now representing CSA 64 and 42 which includes Spring Valley Lake and Oro Grande. Victorville Mayor Debra Jones is representing the City of Victorville and Councilman Bill Holland is representing the City of Hesperia. Welcome Commissioners!

Purple Pipe
 VWRA
 Board of Commissioners
 Bill Holland / Hesperia
 Debra Jones / Victorville
 Scott Nassif / Apple Valley
 Paul Cook / SB CSA 64 & 42

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Bruce Correia retires after 27 years

Congratulations to MIS Coordinator Bruce Correia who retired at the end of 2020. With 27 years at VWRA, Bruce has the distinction of being the longest tenured employee in agency history. Bruce was a well-liked staff member who worked in a variety of positions over the years. He also worked extensively with Granite Hills High School students teaching them about SCADA. We thank Bruce for his service and wish him a wonderful retirement!





Around the Plant

VVWRA staff win 4 CWEA/DAMS Awards

Wins in electrical instrumentation, environmental compliance, leadership and administrative support



Latif Laari



Derek Evans



Robert Townsend



Kristi Casteel

Four members of VVWRA's staff won CWEA/DAMS regional awards this year. The awards are handed out annually and recognize excellence in a variety of areas. Business Applications Manager Latif Laari took home the prize for Supervisor of the Year. Latif oversees several areas including GIS and software management. Derek Evans won Electrical Instrumentation Person of the Year. Environmental Compliance Inspector Robert Townsend won EC Person of the Year. Robert has been with VVWRA 9 years and makes sure that our interceptors flow properly. Assistant to the General Manager Kristi Casteel won the award for Administrative Support Person of the Year.

Congratulations!



E & I intern Adalberto Arteaga has passed his Grade 2 E & I Certification exam.



James Pasieka is our new Environmental Compliance in Training Tech. He had previously worked as an operations intern and septage receiving attendant.



Brandon Talley is our new Septage Receiving Attendant.. He had previously worked as a maintenance intern.



Renewable Natural Gas Project Moves Forward



Workers set a new 10,000 gallon ADM tank in place.

Work is continuing on an exciting renewable natural gas project at VVWRA that promises to provide a new source of green energy. The project is a partnership with VVWRA, Anaergia Inc. and Southwest Gas. The original three anaerobic digesters built at VVWRA in the late 1970's have been modified and upgraded. They are now operational for the first time in more than 10 years and producing biogas. They eventually will be operated by Anaergia and will take in something called ADM (anaerobically digestible material). ADM is different than normal sewer flow. It consists generally of food waste and can include things like expired milk, chocolate and kitchen grease. To increase capacity for ADM, a second 10,000 gallon tank was recently installed with another 40,000 gallon tank planned nearby. New piping and gas scrubbing infrastructure will be built to deliver clean renewable natural gas to a major Southwest Gas pipeline that runs through the west side of VVWRA property. The gas will be injected into the SWG pipeline. Gas scrubbing is a process that cleans the biogas so it meets natural gas standards.



Hawk Eye!

This beautiful hawk was spotted flying over drying bed #11 at our main plant. Because of the close proximity to the Mojave River and the plentiful supply of water, VVWRA has a wide variety of animal visitors throughout the year. It's not unusual to see raccoons, various snakes, coyotes, bobcats, frogs and a variety of water fowl.

(Photo by Michelle Quintana)



CWEA and OnVue offer Online Certification Exams

Exams can be taken on work or home computers

CWEA's Technical Certification Program is proud to introduce the OnVUE exam service. The new online proctoring service allows you to take CWEA certification exams conveniently at your home or workplace. Check out CWEA.org/certification for more info.

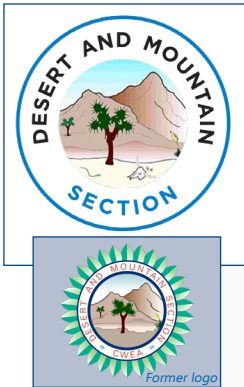
All five CWEA certification exams overseen by the Technical Certification Program are eligible to take via the OnVUE online system. Online exams include grades 1 to 4 for:

- Collection System Maintenance
- Electrical / Instrumentation Technologist
- Environmental Compliance Inspector
- Laboratory Analyst
- Mechanical Technologist



Now you have the choice of scheduling an OnVUE online exam or taking the exam at one of PearsonVUE's hundreds of testing centers located across California and throughout the United States. You should carefully examine both options before making the choice to see which exam format is best for you. In addition, CWEA will be launching its

Online Wastewater Education Network (OWEN) very soon. OWEN will have great content from the CWEA and local section training webinars; premier conference presentations and talks from specialty workshops.



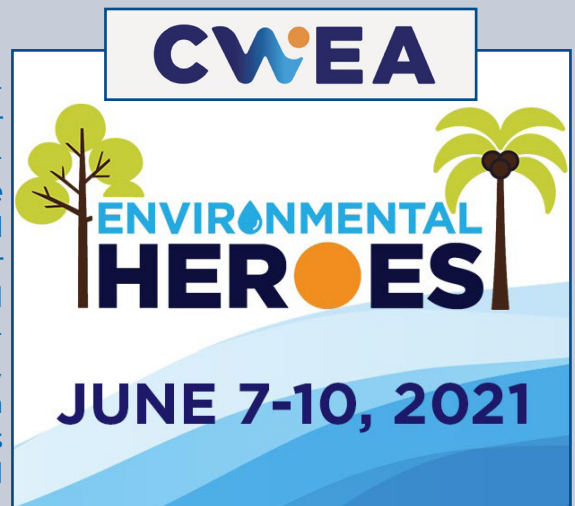
CWEA/DAMS Unveils New Logo

CWEA has redesigned the logos of all regional sections including the logo for the Desert and Mountain Section (DAMS). The new logo is similar to the old one with the mountains and Joshua trees, but the color of the lettering has been changed and green feathering around the outside has been removed. CWEA did a similar redesign to all the sectional logos to give a more uniformed look. The redesign coincided with CWEA's refreshed branding.



CWEA Hosting Virtual AC 21 Conference

The California Water Environment Association is organizing one of the largest gatherings of CWEA members ever for virtual learning, networking and fun during the pandemic. AC 21 is set for June 7-10. The Annual Conference is known for its vibrant education programming, impactful networking, and opportunities to reflect and connect over emerging and salient topics in our field. This year's virtual conference will include the regular offerings and opportunities for engagement, including educational sessions, networking events, keynotes, plus space to connect with sponsors, exhibitors, and water industry professionals from California and across the USA. The event is planned for June 7-10. More details to come.



Solar Project Runs through VWVRA

Crews prepare site for large power poles.



Workers prepare the site and move a large auger into place before beginning to dig.

To secure the poles, a large auger was brought in to dig holes. The holes ranged from 15 to 32 feet deep and ten feet wide. The holes were lined with steel rebar reinforcement and filled with concrete.



An archaeologist sifts through dirt pulled from the holes looking for artifacts and fossils.

VWVRA is getting a new neighbor. The High Desert Solar Project is a 100-megawatt solar power plant is being constructed by Goldman Sachs Renewable Power on a 585 acre site northwest of our main plant. As part of that project, power poles ranging from 105 to 140 feet tall are being installed at six locations on VWVRA property; four along our west fence on the main plant and two adjacent to our nearby south percolation ponds. The poles will hold high power transmission lines from the new power plant en route to a nearby sub-station.



A base hole 32 feet deep and ten feet wide was filled with 100 yards of concrete.

During the digging process, an archaeologist, a paleontologist and a representative of a regional Native American tribe were on hand to look for fossils or artifacts. No artifacts were found. The state of California requires this type of monitoring at most large construction sites.



Solar Project Runs through VWRA

Power up!



Workers use a crane to put in place the second section of a three-piece power pole along VWRA's western fence line. It is one of four new high voltage power lines installed on VWRA's main plant. The arrows indicate their locations. Two more poles are being installed further to the south adjacent to our south percolation ponds.

High Desert Solar Project fast facts

- 585 acres-Northwest of VWRA near SCLA
- Will generate 100 megawatts
- Produce power for more 45,000+ homes per year
- 50 megawatt battery storage
- Completion expected by early Fall 2021



Fully assembled power pole. Power lines will be installed with the help of a helicopter.

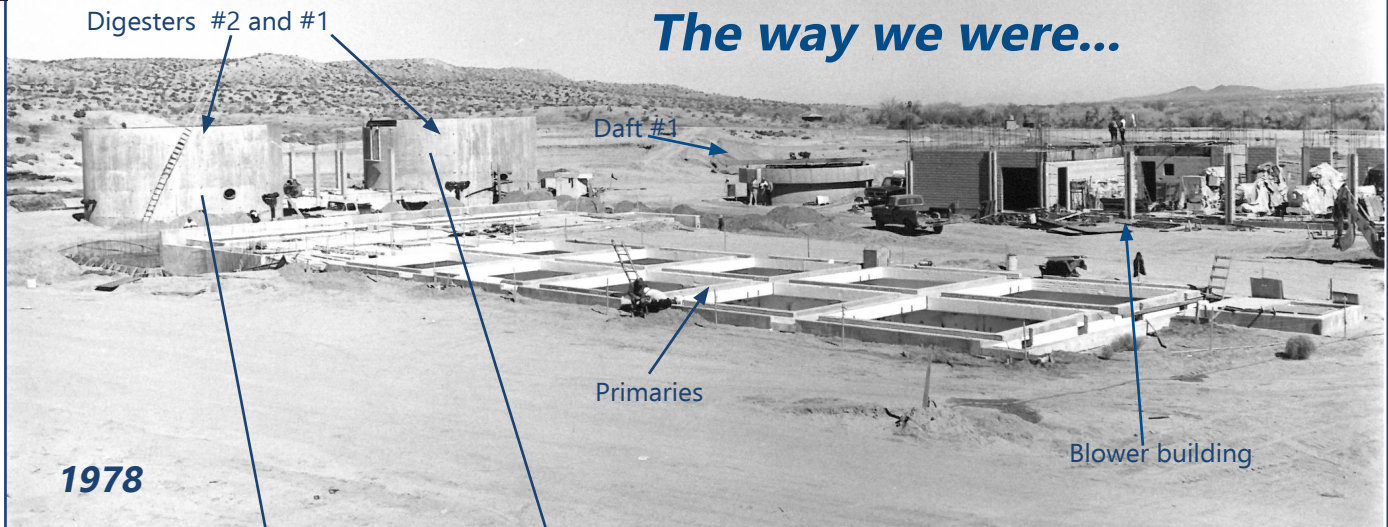


A large base section of power pole waiting to be installed.



The Back Side...

The way we were...



Oh, how we've grown over the years! The top photo was taken in 1978 during the initial construction of the main VVWRA plant. In the top photo, you can see digesters #1 and #2 along with 2 primaries, a daft and the first blower building. In the bottom photo, you can see the newly recommissioned digesters with new bubble style roofs and 8 primaries. VVWRA currently operates 5 digesters, 8 primaries and 2 blower buildings.

Save the date

TRI-STATE SEMINAR

August 9-12, 2021

Details coming soon!