

Tom Fayram, President  
Brad Ross, Vice-President  
Julie Kennedy, Director  
Lisa Palmer, Director  
Greg Parks, Director



**LOS OLIVOS COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT  
WORKSHOP**

**Posted: 1-6-2023**

**January 11, 2023, 6:00 PM**

**St Mark's in the Valley Episcopal Church, Stacy Hall  
2901 Nojoqui Ave, Los Olivos CA 93441**

**Please observe decorum and instructions from the President**

This meeting will be held both in-person and electronically via Zoom meetings. In-person the meeting will be held at the following location:  
St Mark's in the Valley Episcopal Church, Stacy Hall - 2901 Nojoqui Ave, Los Olivos CA 93441

The public will also be able to hear and participate electronically by using the following links:

On Zoom:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82515801920?pwd=VHFQd1VDZUVucFZXZEVEEdVhzVjhhkQT09>

By Phone:

Meeting ID: 825 1580 1920 Passcode: 378600

One tap mobile +16694449171,,82515801920#,,,,\*378600# US

The Los Olivos Community Services District is committed to ensuring equal access to meetings. In compliance with the American Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in the meeting or need this agenda provided in a disability-related alternative format, please call 805.500.4098 or email to [losolivoscscd@gmail.com](mailto:losolivoscscd@gmail.com). Any public records, which are distributed less than 72 hours prior to this meeting to all, or a majority of all, of the District's Board members in connection with any agenda item (other than closed sessions) will be available for public inspection at the time of such distribution at a location to be determined in Los Olivos, California 93441.

**MEETING AGENDA**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Members of the public may address the Committee on any items of interest within the subject matter and jurisdiction of the Committee but not on the agenda today (Gov. Code - 54954.3). The public may also request future agenda topics at this time. Speakers are limited to 3 minutes. Due to the requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act, the District cannot take action today on any matter not on the agenda, but a matter raised during Public Comments can be referred to District staff for discussion and possible action at a future meeting.

**4. WORKSHOP**

Representatives from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and County of Santa Barbara Environmental Health Services (EHS) will discuss their respective letters from 2022 (see attached) as well as other pertinent matters related to the LOCSD wastewater treatment and reclamation project. EHS discussion will include receiving input on the Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) as it relates to parcels within the LOCSD boundaries.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

**NOTE THAT THIS WORKSHOP WILL BE FOLLOWED BY THE LOCSD BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S REGULAR MEETING FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2023.**

**Los Olivos Community Services District, P.O. Box 345, Los Olivos, CA 93441, (805) 500-4098**

[losolivoscscd@gmail.com](mailto:losolivoscscd@gmail.com), [www.losolivoscscd.com](http://www.losolivoscscd.com)

Agenda Packet  
Page 1 of 8

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## Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

September 23, 2022

Guy Savage  
General Manager  
Los Olivos Community Services District  
[gm.locsd@gmail.com](mailto:gm.locsd@gmail.com)

Sent by electronic mail

Dear Mr. Savage:

### **RE: Los Olivos Community Wastewater Reclamation System Project**

The implementation of community wastewater systems are a high priority for the Central Coast Water Board. As you know, California law requires the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region (Central Coast Water Board) to regulate waste discharges (including those from septic systems) to ensure long-term water quality protection. Therefore, the Central Coast Water Board has direct regulatory authority over individual septic and community wastewater systems in the central coast region. Throughout the past several decades, the Central Coast Water Board has supported and continues to support Santa Barbara County and the Los Olivos Community Services District's (CSD) efforts to implement a community wastewater reclamation system for the Los Olivos Community to replace individual septic systems (also known as onsite wastewater treatment systems or OWTS).

In 1974, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors designated Los Olivos as a Special Problem Area for septic systems and the county has since conducted several studies evaluating and supporting the implementation of a community wastewater system. The basis for the county's 1974 designation was combination of compounding factors in the community including small lot sizes and unfavorable soil conditions for septic system disposal, and nitrate impacts to shallow drinking water supply wells. The Central Coast Water Board's 1989 *Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin* (Basin Plan) also identified Los Olivos as an area needing wastewater management planning. The county's 2003 Septic System Survey<sup>1</sup> identify the Los Olivos area as high risk for OWTS contamination of groundwater and surface water due to the high density of systems associated with small lot sizes, shallow groundwater, unfavorable soil conditions, proximity to surface water bodies, age and condition of

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<sup>1</sup> Hantzsche, N.N., Habal, J.A., Hopkins, W., McGregor, J., Eckman, N., Gonzales, M., Pettifor, G. (2003). Septic system sanitary survey for Santa Barbara County California. Questa Engineering Corporation Project #210029 prepared for Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services.

systems, and the predominant septic system disposal method employed in the community. Some of these issues are described in more detail below to provide context regarding the necessity of the community wastewater system project.

Lot sizes are small in Los Olivos with approximately two thirds of the lots being less than half an acre and many of the lots less than a quarter acre. For reference, the State Water Resources Control Board's statewide OWTS Policy<sup>2</sup> limits parcel size for new subdivisions utilizing OWTS to a half-acre or greater based on average annual rainfall (Section 7.8, Table 1, OWTS Policy). The OWTS Policy dictates minimum lot sizes of two or two and one-half acres for Los Olivos based on an available range of average annual rainfall data for the Los Olivos area.

Soil conditions that are unfavorable to percolation and small lot sizes in the Los Olivos area preclude the use of conventional leachfields to spread out the septic system effluent discharge closer to the surface where it can percolate through the soil before reaching groundwater. The county's 2003 Septic System Survey found that approximately two thirds of the surveyed systems utilized drywells or seepage pits. Seepage pits are a high-risk disposal method for groundwater contamination because they concentrate septic system effluent disposal over a smaller area and reduce the level of wastewater contaminant treatment and attenuation that would occur in the unsaturated soil zone over a greater area and depth as compared to conventional leachfields.

The use of drywells and seepage pits coupled with shallow groundwater increases the risks of groundwater contamination from septic system discharges. According to the 2003 Septic System Survey, first encountered groundwater exists at 5-15 feet below ground surface (bgs) in Los Olivos and many of the seepage pits may discharge directly into the saturated portion of the aquifer, precluding unsaturated zone soil treatment and attenuation before the septic system effluent reaches groundwater. At the time the 2003 Septic System Survey was conducted, approximately one third of the systems were greater than 10 years old. Septic systems typically have a lifespan of approximately 40 years. Many of the systems in Los Olivos are approaching the end of their useful life and may result in a decrease in treatment and disposal performance.

Shallower drinking water supply wells in the Los Olivos community historically identified as being impacted with nitrate have been abandoned and replaced with deeper water supply wells. Nitrate concentrations in deeper water supply wells that now support the Los Olivos community contain fluctuating levels of nitrate with maximum levels of up to 4.3 milligrams per liter as nitrogen (mg/L - N); the public health drinking water maximum contaminant level is 10 mg/L - N). Although limited groundwater quality data are available for the Los Olivos area, these data and the above noted unfavorable septic system issues in the Los Olivos area support the Special Problem Area designation and need for a community wastewater system.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/owts/docs/owts\\_policy.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/owts/docs/owts_policy.pdf)

Increased groundwater regulation through the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and an ever-worsening drought that limits statewide water supply and increases groundwater pumping requires communities to consider all sources of water as a critical resource and to develop long-term approaches to protect and manage our shared finite water supplies. A community wastewater reclamation system will provide both water quality and water supply benefits for the Los Olivos community by eliminating nitrate discharges from septic systems to the community's groundwater supply and by producing a drought resilient source of recycled water for beneficial reuse in the community. The county and CSD have invested significant staff and financial resources towards evaluating various community wastewater system alternatives and is on a critical path towards realizing a project that will benefit the Los Olivos community well into the future.

Ongoing wastewater management in Los Olivos via OWTS will be subject to Santa Barbara County oversight via ordinances in accordance with the county's Local Agency Management Plan (LAMP)<sup>3</sup> approved by the Central Coast Water Board pursuant to the OWTS Policy. The LAMP and associated ordinances include OWTS related requirements and restrictions for Los Olivos in addition to other problem areas in the county. The ongoing operation and maintenance of OWTS, particularly for high-risk constrained site conditions and systems like those in Los Olivos, will be burdensome and costly to individual property owners and the community. A community wastewater facility owned and operated by the Los Olivos Community Services District will facilitate local control of wastewater services versus control by the county or Central Coast Water Board as may be necessary in the future if a community wastewater system is not implemented and the area is subject to ongoing OWTS failures or continued water quality degradation.

It is the Central Coast Water Board's longstanding position that a community wastewater solution is necessary for Los Olivos' benefit and viability. Continued use of individual septic systems is not feasible in the long term for the reasons outlined above and will result in ongoing potential system failures, groundwater degradation, and financial and intrinsic societal costs to the community associated with a substandard wastewater management approach subject to county and state level requirements and restrictions. A community-based approach will also enable Los Olivos to better manage its water supply via the potential beneficial reuse of recycled water and/or the discharge of highly treated wastewater into the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin the Los Olivos community relies on for its drinking water supply. Wastewater and water supply infrastructure funding is currently available through various state and federal programs that could be pursued in support of implementing a community wastewater reclamation system project. The cost of a community wastewater project will increase and the availability of funding will decrease with each passing month, so time is of the essence to finally act on this warranted project that has been discussed and studied for nearly five decades.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/6aa4e5d0-3d64-4521-99e9-b37e89eaa7b0?cache=1800>

The Central Coast Water Board is committed to working in partnership with the Los Olivos community and Santa Barbara County to facilitate this very important and necessary project for the community and for the future of our shared water resources.

Sincerely,

Matthew T. Keeling  
Executive Officer

cc:

Lars Seifert, Santa Barbara County, Environmental Health Services Director  
[Lars.Seifert@sbcphd.org](mailto:Lars.Seifert@sbcphd.org)

Supervisor Joan Hartmann, Third District, Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
[jHartmann@countyofsb.org](mailto:jHartmann@countyofsb.org)

Mike Prater, Executive Officer, Santa Barbara County Local Agency Formation  
Commission  
[lafco@sblafco.org](mailto:lafco@sblafco.org)

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**Daniel L. B. Nielson, MPA** *Interim Director*  
**Suzanne Jacobson, CPA** *Chief Financial Officer*  
**Palge Batson, MA, PHN, RN** *Deputy Director*  
**Darrin Eisenbarth** *Deputy Director*  
**Dana Gamble, LCSW** *Deputy Director*  
**Henning Ansorg, MD** *Health Officer*

**Environmental Health Services**

225 Camino del Remedio ♦ Santa Barbara, CA 93110  
805/681-4900 ♦ FAX 805/681-4901

2125 S. Centerpointe Pkwy. #333 ♦ Santa Maria, CA 93455-1340  
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**Lars Selfert** *Director of Environmental Health*

October 31, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Guy Savage  
General Manager  
Los Olivos Community Services District  
[gm.locsd@gmail.com](mailto:gm.locsd@gmail.com)

Dear Mr. Savage:

Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services (EHS), as the locally-designated administrative authority for enforcing the County's Local Agency Management Program (LAMP), finds it necessary to inform you in writing that timely steps are needed to establish a community wastewater treatment system for the Los Olivos Community Services District.

Wastewater treatment in Los Olivos and the surrounding area is currently provided through the use of onsite wastewater treatment systems (commonly referred to as septic systems) located on individual parcels. However, due to the high density of existing septic systems associated with small lot sizes (less than 2.5 acres), unfavorable soil conditions, and the deteriorating functionality of aging systems in the district, there is a high and continuing risk for contamination of groundwater within the Los Olivos Community Service District service area.

In Los Olivos, most parcels are developed and many of the septic systems are approaching the end of their useful life. The components of the systems (tanks, piping, valves, and dispersal field) have varying lifespans based on factors such as the construction and use of the system, but typically require replacement within 40 years. Many of these aging systems are at risk of failing. A *failing* septic system is a system that is not properly treating wastewater and is typically indicated by a backup of sewage into the structure or sewage surfacing on the ground. In general, the failure occurs at the dispersal field, which could be either a drywell (seepage pit) or leach lines. A failure may also be indicated by needing to pump the tank more than once a year (so as to reduce flow to the dispersal field).

It is imperative for property owners within the Los Olivos Community Services District to be aware that current upfront cost estimates for the design and installation of a supplemental treatment system and a dispersal field to replace a failing septic system range from \$30,000 to \$70,000, depending on site conditions and the components required. On parcels in Los Olivos that have limited buildable space, construction costs for a septic system that meets current requirements may not be feasible or may be even more costly to construct.

For your reference, the required permitting steps and associated ongoing costs for a septic system with supplemental treatment based on non-site specific, third-party estimates have been outlined on the following page. Note that any new, modified, or replacement septic system on a parcel less than 2.5 acres in size requires the installation of supplemental treatment to reduce the ongoing risk of contamination in shallow groundwater.

**Steps to permit and construct a septic system in Los Olivos:**

1. Obtain a site-specific design for the system prepared by a California licensed professional engineer or other qualified professional including soils/percolation data.
2. Submit a permit application to EHS, including design and application fee.
  - a. "New" or "Modification" - \$255 + \$161/hour
  - b. "Repairs" - (\$713).
3. Upon approval, construct the system per approved plans. For systems with supplemental treatment, a Notice to Property Owner shall be recorded, and service contract provided to EHS, prior to final inspection.

Estimated **one-time** construction costs: **\$30,000 to \$70,000**

4. Operation and maintenance of a supplemental treatment system requires:
  - a. Operating permit (Permit renewal permit fee every 5 years = \$324),
  - b. Service contract with qualified provider, inspections per manufacturer's requirements, generally every 6 months (\$800-1200/year),
  - c. Effluent sampling, analyzed for total suspended solids, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD<sub>5</sub>, five-day biochemical oxygen demand), and nitrogen series (Total nitrogen (as N)) (\$400/year),
  - d. Pumping the septic tank or supplemental treatment tank (\$1,200 every 5 years),
  - e. Property owner shall submit inspection reports and effluent sampling analysis within 30 days of inspection.

Estimated **ongoing** cost for OWTS<sup>1</sup>: **\$1,505 - \$1,905/year**

**(or \$125-\$159 monthly)**

The ongoing operation and maintenance of septic systems with supplemental treatment is burdensome and costly to individual property owners and the community. As outlined in communication by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (dated September 23, 2022), a community wastewater project engineered for the district is necessary to avoid inevitable septic system failures and to avoid continued groundwater degradation in the area. As a result, EHS expects you to take prompt and timely steps to establish a community wastewater treatment system for the Los Olivos Community Services District.

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<sup>1</sup> Not including electricity or telecommunication/monitoring costs and system component replacements.

If you or members of the community have any questions, please direct them by email to [ehsadmin@sbcphd.org](mailto:ehsadmin@sbcphd.org).

Regards,

Lars Seifert, M.A., REHS, Director  
Environmental Health Services

Cc: Chair Joan Hartmann, Third District, Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
[JHartmann@countyofsb.org](mailto:JHartmann@countyofsb.org)

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