

**Lower Russian River Wastewater  
Citizens Advisory Group (CAG)**

***Agenda  
October 24th, 2024  
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM***

***Meeting held at the Monte Rio Community Center  
20488 Highway 116, Monte Rio, CA 95462***

***and via Zoom***

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Zoom Information:

<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/94729126850?pwd=bHZy8fnFQrzSQEoVwWwEt5Nz3QmBbRQ.1>

**What is the CAG?**

The Lower Russian River Wastewater Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) is engaged with efforts to develop sustainable and affordable wastewater solutions for communities in the lower Russian River area that will improve local water quality and meet the new State and County requirements. The CAG has two primary roles: (1) communicating with and advising the Interagency Team (IT) that is coordinating regulatory and implementation efforts, including a wastewater treatment improvement pilot project for the Monte Rio Villa Grande area, and (2) supporting citizens in understanding how the pilot project will identify wastewater solutions in combination with the new regulations might impact them.

Additional rules and meeting procedures can be noted at the end of this agenda.

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**Agenda – 120 minutes.**

**1. Meeting Notes for 9/26/24 ~ 1 minute**

- a. *NOTE: Meeting notes to consist of key points and action items for each agenda item.*

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**2. Status Updates on Action Items ~ 5 minutes.**

- a. November CAG meeting has been rescheduled for November 21<sup>st</sup> to avoid Thanksgiving.

**3. Discussion Items ~ 90 minutes.**

- a. Brelje & Race Alternatives Analysis.
  - i. Brief Introduction to Study.
  - ii. Questions from the Public.

**4. Inter-Agency Team Updates ~ 10 minutes.**

- a. Regional Water Board -
- b. Sonoma Water -
- c. Permit Sonoma -
- d. Sonoma County -
- e. CAG IT Representative -

**5. Questions from the public ~ 10 minutes.**

**6. CAG Member Updates, Announcements ~ 4 minutes.**

- a. Future Agenda Items -
    - i. Related wastewater studies in Sonoma County (Mapping study, West County Water Quality and Recycled Water Supply Feasibility Project).
    - ii. Sub-committee updates (Advocacy & Influence, communication).
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## **Lower Russian River Wastewater**

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#### **Meeting Rules and Procedures**

- Guest comments will be considered on the agenda under each discussion item and will be time-limited at the discretion of the CAG chair. Guests may also be invited to provide input on special agenda items during planned sessions (these will usually be indicated in advance of the meeting).
- The chair will determine if there is adequate time for public comment at the end of each agenda item.

#### **Four Areas of CAG Focus**

- **Advocacy** - for people, resources, solutions, and support/assistance (funding, political will, direct assistance to individuals, a range of alternatives)
- **Influence** - work with the County and State to heighten awareness and the need for priority on the issue with the state/county staff and elected officials. Focus on getting the county more deeply engaged and increasing Permit Sonoma participation and engagement.
- **Collaboration** - with the project consultant(s) and implementation partners. Provide advice on all aspects of the MR/VG Pilot project.
- **Communications** - with the public and community. Provide easy access to minutes and relevant documents. Includes Website. Press releases, updates to elected officials and others. Help with community events. Help develop and support a communications strategy.

## **Lower Russian River Wastewater**

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### **CAG Accomplishments:**

The CAG has:

- Made presentations on the CAG's work to the Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council and the State and Regional Water Quality Control Boards.
- Participated in the selection process to identify consultant(s) for a feasibility study of potential wastewater solutions and implementation for Monte Rio/Villa Grande. Note: Selection of the consultant is well underway and should occur soon.
- Provided input to the role and selection of the Ombudsperson, responsible for supporting county residents in understanding and complying with wastewater regulations.
- Worked with regulators to address what owners of septic systems can do if their septic systems fail or need improvement while broader solutions are being identified and implemented.
- Introduced our issues to State and Federal elected and agency officials and requested their support in broadening acceptable solutions and identifying funding sources.
- Hosted tours for Regional Board and Sonoma Water staff of the area to familiarize leadership with the scope and scale of the issues.
- Met with representatives of the BOS, and encouraged a county-wide approach to wastewater; this resulted in the BOS budgeting a \$350K allocation of county funds to better understand the scale of the issue county-wide and creating a Full-Time, county-wide permanent wastewater analyst's position (which includes the Ombudsperson functions) currently in an active hiring process.
- Pushed for a more generous interpretation of the State OWTS (Onsite Wastewater Treatment System) Policy in the County OWTS Manual and influenced technical language in the State Board's LAMP (Local Area Management Plan) and the county's OWTS manual including the definition of a "Qualified Inspector" of individual septic systems.