



GRAVITY FLOWLINE



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San Luis Obispo | Santa Barbara | Ventura Counties

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Annual CWEA Tri-Counties Section Awards Banquet



Robert Barretto, Ventura Water accept Collection System Person of the Year award.

Read more on page 4



Welcome!

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CWEA Tri-Counties Section Members: Current members will automatically receive the *Gravity Flowline* Newsletter

Renew your membership or update your mailing address: CWEA, 7677 Oakport Street, Suite 600 Oakland, CA 94621-1935

Phone: 510-382-7800 Fax: 510-382-7810 Email: info@cwea.org http://www.cwea.org/mlr_member_renewmem.html

Visit "<http://www.cwea.org/TriCounties>" for up-to-date information, event flyers, workshop schedules/registration forms, and vendor registration forms for all TRIS events.

Incoming President's Message

By Jacob Broad

Hello CWEA Tri-Counties Section Members,

My name is Jacob Broad, and I am excited to serve as the section's President this year. My goal is to continue our section's traditions by providing helpful and beneficial educational opportunities that will help you expand your wastewater career. I am thankful to have strong help and support from our volunteer Board Members, Chairpersons, and Vendors.

When I tell people about our line of work, I sometimes get funny looks, as we are all involved in a less-than-glamorous industry. However, our work is vital to maintaining healthy, functioning communities. One of my favorite parts of this industry is the people who work within it. In my experience, the community of wastewater professionals is full of hardworking individuals dedicated to serving their communities and protecting our local environments. I look forward to catching up with old colleagues and meeting new members while serving as President this year.

Wishing good fortune to us all as we move through 2025.

- Jacob Broad

CWEA Tri-Counties Section President, 2025



Did you know CWEA Tricounties Section has its own Facebook page? If you're on Facebook, let's get connected!!! It's easy, from your own account search:

"Tri Counties Section of the CWEA"

We post pictures, announcements, member news,

CWEA Tri-Counties Section Annual Awards Banquet

By Baylie Martinez

Timbers Roadhouse
Goleta, CA
January 6, 2025

Our Tri-Counties Section (TCS)

Thank you to all who attended the Annual CWEA Tri-Counties Section Awards ceremony. The venue was very accommodating for the crowd and there was a great turn out. We would like to take a moment to congratulate our wonderful winners!

Small Plant of the Year:

City of Paso Robles

Collection System of the Year:

Camarillo Sanitary District

Collection System of the Year Runner Up:

City of San Luis Obispo

Community Engagement and Outreach:

Ventura Water

Safety Plant of the Year:

County of San Luis Obispo

P3S Person of the Year: **Baylie Martinez**

Collection System Person of the Year:

Robert Barretto

Collection System Person of the Year:

Robert Luna

Supervisor of the Year: **Mark Bennett**

Gimmicks and Gadgets: **Vince Gutierrez**



Camarillo Sanitary District accepts Collection System of the Year award. Congratulations to their team!



Mark Bennet accepts Supervisor of the Year award.



Roberto Luna accepts Collection System Person of the Year award.



Ventura Water Staff Susan Birch and Baylie Martinez accept Community Engagement and Outreach award for their project "Chase the Sewer Polluter".

Leading with Purpose: An Interview with Vince Ines, Wastewater Utility Manager for Ventura Water

By Alec Roberts, Ventura Water



Leadership in wastewater management requires a unique combination of technical expertise, operational experience, and a commitment to supporting and developing a skilled team. Vince Ines, Wastewater Utility Manager for Ventura Water, has built a career rooted in these principles. In this interview, he shares his insights on leadership, professional growth, and the importance of mentorship in the industry.

Q: What advice would you give to someone aspiring to become a wastewater utility manager?

A: Start by building a solid foundation in wastewater operations through hands-on experience. Listen to the operators, those on the front lines, and understand their needs. As a manager, your role is to provide them with the tools, training, and support they need to succeed.

Beyond operations, it's essential to learn the engineering side of the industry, reading plans, understanding procurement processes, and being actively involved in construction and sequencing. Know what is feasible and what isn't. Pay close attention to regulatory permits and their operational impacts, one improvement should never come at the cost of another critical function. Leadership skills are just as important as technical expertise. Stay informed about industry trends and always keep the bigger picture in mind: our work directly impacts public health and the environment.

Q: How important is pursuing certifications?

A: Certifications are crucial. Without them, advancing in this field is nearly impossible. They validate your technical knowledge and enhance your credibility. You can't fake your way through a Grade 5 certification exam, it requires a deep understanding of mathematics, regulations, and critical thinking. Earning certifications demonstrates commitment and expertise, which earns respect within the industry.

Q: How important is education in this field?

A: Education plays a key role in career progression and is often a prerequisite for certification. It can also substitute for years of field experience, accelerating career growth. The combination of education and hands-on experience is invaluable for mastering the complexities of wastewater management. You don't have to look far for opportunities to advance your education, Ventura College has a great program locally.

Q: When making major decisions, what is your thought process?

A: Someone once told me to follow three fundamental questions: Is it ethical? Is it legal? Is it safe? Beyond that, I consider how a decision will impact various divisions, operations, maintenance, environmental compliance (source control), collections, laboratory, etc. and how it will affect regulatory permits. Maintaining balance within the treatment process is critical, so every decision must be weighed carefully to ensure it benefits the system as a whole.



Q: How has your leadership style evolved over the years?

A: When stepping into a leadership role at a new facility, the goal shouldn't be to make a name for yourself, it should be to ensure the work gets done effectively. I rely on supervisors first, stepping in when necessary to offer guidance and enforce standards. My priority is always to support my staff, ensuring they have what they need to succeed. If mistakes happen, I don't get frustrated as long as they made with the best available information. Building trust in your staff allows me to focus on other priorities that our department is facing.

I focus on efficiency, problem-solving, and employee development. Encouraging staff to take advantage of learning opportunities builds confidence and self-worth. I often ask younger employees, especially in emergency situations, what they would do if they were in charge. It challenges them to think critically and prepares them for leadership roles in the future. One of my favorite leadership principles is captured in a quote from former President Reagan: "There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he doesn't mind who gets the credit."

Q: What is the most rewarding part of your job?

A: From a management perspective, one of the greatest rewards is seeing employees start in entry-level positions, just as I did, and work their way up. Mentoring staff and helping them recognize their worth is incredibly fulfilling. I take pride in supporting my team's growth, even if it means they move on to opportunities elsewhere.

On a larger scale, our work improves the environment. Taking contaminated water and treating it to a level where it's safe for reuse is a remarkable process. It's a privilege to contribute to such an essential service.

Q: Any final thoughts or advice?

A: Always be open to different perspectives and carefully weigh the pros and cons of each decision. Fiscal responsibility to ratepayers is essential, but ultimately, our job is about supporting our staff and helping them grow. They deserve recognition and praise for their hard work. It's not about taking credit, it's about ensuring the team succeeds. Seeing colleagues like Baylie Martinez and Robert Barreto earn recognition at the CWEA Tri-Counties awards night is what leadership is all about—lifting others up and celebrating their success.

“Chase The Sewer Polluter”

Community Engagement and Outreach Project of the Year

By Baylie Martinez, Ventura Water



In the spirit of creating an engaging activity that would ignite an interest in and invite students to explore water related careers, Ventura Water’s outreach and wastewater staff collaborated to conceptualize this unique and educational hands-on experience. Mimicking the real-life process that environmental compliance inspectors use to track down pollutants and illicit dischargers in the City’s collection system, Ventura Water staff created the elimination adventure game “Chase the Sewer Polluter”.



The game starts with a “mystery polluter” card that lists specific water quality parameters of the unidentified pollutant source. 5- gallon buckets representing manholes are set out with PVC pipes representing sewer lines. At the end of the game, players reach one of the 5 storage containers representing industrial, commercial or residential dischargers. Each “manhole” bucket contains water with different prepared water qualities such as high electrical conductivity and low electrical conductivity. Players use electrical conductivity meters to determine which buckets have high and low levels. From there, they move up the sewer line that corresponds to their game card. They test the next set of “manholes” for pH levels using color changing pH test strips and then move on to the next section depending on what they have on their card. Another set of “manholes” are then observed for color. From there, they follow the line leading to the corresponding storage container to reveal who their polluter is; a container filled with plastic lemons for a packing house, metal gear parts for a metal finisher, laundry detergent for a laundry mat, empty beer cans for breweries and a picture of a home to indicate that some household items dumped down the drain can be hazardous to the sewer system. Participants become a “Junior Environmental Compliance Inspector” and receive a badge sticker at the end of the activity.

All in all the project received rave reviews for its hands-on interaction and engagement along with easy to follow instructions for staff. The total budget for this project amounted to a mere \$750, making it a cost-effective and successful outreach tool for the program.



Gravity Flowline subscription expired?

NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS: The State CWEA collects local membership dues on behalf of local sections. Members of CWEA will be contacted regarding membership expiration. Subscriptions are automatically renewed after dues are paid. If you do not hear from CWEA before your membership expires, please contact the State CWEA Office at 510-382-7800 for the status of your membership.

NON-MEMBERS: A non-member subscription is \$16 per year. Complete this form and submit it along with your check to the address below. Indicate your delivery address. CWEA members who are not Tri-Counties Section members may get a subscription for \$12.

CWEA Tri-Counties Section Gravity Flowline Subscription & Advertisement Form

☐ SUBSCRIPTION—\$16 per year
I am not a member of CWEA.

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**The deadline for submission for the next issue
is the 15th of the first month of the issue date.**

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Make checks payable to: CWEA Tri-Counties Section



2024 TCS Calendar of Events

MARCH 2025

MARCH WORKSHOP & TRAINING SEMINAR

Thursday March 20th, 2025 8:00am-2:30pm

Carpinteria Sanitary District

***Due to limited parking availability carpooling is encouraged!

Preliminary Class Program



www.cwea.org/TriCounties/


MARCH WORKSHOP AND TRAINING SEMINAR CWEA TRI - COUNTIES SECTION

Thursday, MARCH 20, 2025 8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Carpinteria Sanitary District



California Water
Environment
Association
www.cwea.org

	SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3	 TRI-COUNTIES SECTION <small>SAN LUIS OBISPO SANTA BARBARA VENTURA COUNTIES</small> 2024 Award Winners CWEA TriCounties Award Winners: Small Plant of the Year: City of Paso Robles Collection System of the Year: Camarillo Sanitary District Collection System of the Year Runner Up: City of San Luis Obispo Community Engagement and Outreach: Ventura Water Safety Plant of the Year: County of San Luis Obispo P3S Person of the Year: Baylie Martinez Collection System Person of the Year: Robert Barretto Collection System Person of the Year: Robert Luna Supervisor of the Year: Mark Bennett Gimmicks and Gadgets: Vince Gutierrez
	P3S, Leadership, Lab/Operations	Collections/Maintenance	Lab/Operations	
Room	Boardroom	Maintenance Shop	Storage Building	
Moderator	Mary Thompson	Trevor Strasser	Patrick McCulloch	
8:00 - 8:50	REGISTRATION — VENDOR EXHIBITS			
9:00 - 9:50	Overview of the Metal and Surface Finishing Industries and their Effluent Treatment Dr. Mark Hyman	Condition Based Maintenance Jason Lake	Microscopy, Troubleshooting Wastewater Issues Nicolas Canello	
10:00 - 10:50	Carpinteria Advanced Purification Project Craig Murray	TBD Brian Griggs	Using Mixotrophic Denitrification to Meet Nitrogen Limits Nicolas Canello	
11:00 - 11:50	Wastewater & Recycled Water Testing Shawn Dubois	TBD Heath Nunes	TBD HACH	
12:00 - 1:30	LUNCH - OPS CHALLENGE - DOOR PRIZES - VENDOR EXHIBITS			
1:40 - 2:30	PLANT TOUR Jacob Broad	PLANT TOUR Mark Bennett		
2:30 - 3:00	▶ TCP Contact Hour Certificate Distribution ◀ To receive your certificate, you must register, have this workshop schedule stamped by the moderator in the appropriate Class or Plant Tour and return this completed form before leaving the training workshop. Thank you for your participation!			
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2025 March Workshop				

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A graphic with a yellow background and a brown border. It features a megaphone at the top left and another at the bottom right. Between them are several overlapping banners with the text: "YOUR AD HERE!", "...OR HERE!", "...OR HERE!", "...OR THERE!!!", "...OR ...", and "...EVERYWHERE!!!". At the bottom, a red banner says "ADVERTISE WITH US".



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ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Please share announcements from your agency or organization with us! Advertise open positions, celebrate and honor your employees as they transition to a new chapter in retirement, or introduce a new employee. Do you have a topic in mind for an article in the Gravity Flowline? We are always looking for professional submissions from our members. Please send announcements and submissions to **Baylie Martinez** at bmartinez@cityofventura.ca.gov to be included in our next newsletter.

Tri-Counties Section Mission Statement

To enhance the education and effectiveness of California's Wastewater Professionals through training, certification, dissemination of technical information and promotion of sound policies to benefit society through protection and enhancement of the water environment.



**CALIFORNIA WATER
ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION**

TRI-COUNTIES SECTION

San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara & Ventura Counties

