Cuesta La Honda Guild

Post Office Box 518, La Honda, California 94020
Telephone 650.747-9556 · Email:
garrett.morris@realmanage.com

September 25, 2019

Greetings from the desk of the Chief Water Operator (CWO)!

Just like the tides that ebb and flow or the foggy dew that never fails to come and go, another year has come and gone for this little Coastal Redwood town of La Honda that we all call home. This past year was another productive year for Cuesta despite anticipated and unexpected hurdles. Much like the mighty salmon that must face adversity when they forge their way seasonally upstream, Cuesta has faced many struggles through the years on the journey to making clean, safe and good drinking water that our consumers can count on every day. Complying with the most stringent standards of the Division of Drinking Water (DDW) has been no easy feat. Nor has the task of maintaining a complex water system with limited resources and staffing. However, with our professional staff of expert Treatment and Distribution Operators (Will Long, James Davis, Dave Schorr and myself) as well as help from past and present members and other water experts alike, Cuesta has continued to maintain and exceed compliance standards on many levels. New pipeline projects were completed, our oldest Granny Flats reservoir was lined, Lower Reservoir was cleaned of naturally occurring organic matter (NOM), in addition to continued reservoir management, optimized treatment protocols, and improved distribution system maintenance, all of which is instrumental in achieving goals that Cuesta had its sights set on.

To those unfamiliar, this report contains many acronyms that may seem cryptic. I have done my best to decode for those uninitiated in the drinking water terminology world. For reference: HAA5 compounds (haloacetic acid) are identified as potential cancer-causing carcinogens within the classification family of Disinfection Byproducts (DBP). These DBP's "brew" in our system, because of our disinfectant, chlorine (sodium hypochlorite) combining in the water with naturally occurring organic matter (NOM). The bulk of our NOM is Dissolved Organic Content (DOC) - and it is this DOC which has been the main culprit driving force that has made the process of making good high-quality water challenging. Post Treatment Aeration (PTA) was pioneered for the sole purpose of bringing Cuesta into compliance for its DBP issue. Good reservoir management practices keep our DOC numbers low. The important point for our customers to hear is that ** Cuesta is in full compliance with all DBP standards, with our DBP numbers well below the regulatory limits -- in other words, our water is safe and clean, as certified by the State of California. As the numbers in this report and past reports have shown, pioneering and implementing PTA was effective Cuesta and is a model for small water systems locally and across the nation.

In the thirty-four years that I have called these Coastal Redwood Mountain ranges home I still find La Honda to be a real gem just as depicted in the book “A Separate Place” by Charles Jones. With five generations of family roots that date back to 1888, and as a lifetime resident member of La Honda and employee of Cuesta La Honda Guild for over 11 years, my love for this quaint area that my family, friends, and I call home continues to grow with every season that rolls through. Had it not been for my parents who built homes, cooked and clothed those in need, I would not be the man I am today nor have enough reverence to understand that life is bigger than who we are, and being part of something bigger than yourself is what life is all about. That very mentality has helped me along the way in this line of work and I look forward to passing on my knowledge base to those around me because not only is it my job, it is a way of life, just like water.

If you happen to cross paths with one of Cuesta’s operators around town, make it a point to stop, say hey and thank them for their unrelenting service to providing safe clean drinking water. Many thanks also go to our hard-working Board of Directors who generously volunteer their time to make a difference in this community and whom through the years have made a difference here at Cuesta dating back to the beginning days when the Guild was founded. Without the foundations that were laid from by former local legends we would not be where we are today, nor where we plan to prosperously venture into the future with hard work and determination.

And remember life is short, so make every drop count and enjoy your cup to the fullest…

Thanks much,

- Garrett Morris - CWO