Cuesta La Honda Guild

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

Much like the seasonal breeze that rolls over these grassy hills and wisps up and out through the redwood filled valleys every year, or a harvest moon waxing and waning, so soon did the hands of time of 2019 turn forward leaving 2020 to drop in as the hellacious storm that we all have had to weather. Yet despite this "change in the weather" that has accompanied the inevitable yearly motion, Cuesta has overcome the varying adversity by forging ahead facing anticipated and unexpected hurdles alike by meeting such challenges with mindful planning and steady work on productivity. Like a well-oiled sewing machine quietly and slowly working behind the scenes, Cuesta has been churning out water complying with the most stringent standards of the Division of Drinking Water (DDW).

As a lifetime resident of La Honda with five generations of family roots that date back to 1888 in the area, I am honored to have been able to invest the past twelve years of my life to assisting the water system. Keeping this very water, lifeblood of this town, flowing seamlessly has been no easy feat nor has the task of improving and 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, Caleb Beckett, Dave Schorr and myself) as well as help from past and present staff, members and other water experts alike, Cuesta has continued to maintain and exceed such stringent compliance standards on many levels.

Within this report contains many acronyms that may seem cryptic; however, I have best tried to decipher for those less familiar 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 while good reservoir management practices keep our DOC numbers low. An important point for our customers to hear is that the water Cuesta produces meets all regulatory standards. 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 for Cuesta and is a model for small water systems locally and across the nation.

While out and about If you happen to cross paths with one of Cuesta's operators around town, please take a moment and make a point to stop and say hello. The unrelenting service of providing safe clean drinking water often goes unnoticed and a simple thank you goes a long way. Such thanks also go out 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 placed 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. Who knows what time has in store for the remainder of 2020 as well as years to come? In in the interim, let us all focus our efforts on being mindful of water use habits; knowing the worth of water will assist us all in weathering whatever may come in due time.

Thanks much,

- Garrett Morris – CWO