# Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District, CA

## District Manager

Neher & Associates©

# Marin and Sonoma Counties

Marin and Sonoma Counties lie nestled between the marsh-lined northern shores of San Pablo Bay, the forested mountains of Mendocino, and the cool waters of the Pacific Ocean. This is the pastoral and agricultural region where northern California's wine industry was born more than a century ago. Its gentle, Mediterranean-type climate with warm summer days and cool nights, rainfall concentrated in the winter and early spring, sloping hillsides and abundant waterways make for great wines and living conditions. The Counties are also home to about 740,000 residents who share a strong sense of community and a legacy of preserving and protecting their rich agricultural and community heritage.

Winemaking – both the growing of the grapes and their vinting – is an important part of the economic and cultural life of the region. With over 250 wineries, the Muir Woods redwood forest, Stinson Beach, Point Reyes National Seashore, Mount St. Helena, Mount Tamalpais, Sonoma Coast State Beach, Bodega Bay and many other rivers, streams, ocean and bay, mountain, regional parks, museum and historical sites, as well as sports events such as the Dipsea Race (America's oldest cross country running event), King Ridge GranFondo long distance mass cycling event, and mountain biking on the slopes of Mount Tamalpais and other civic/community activities, it is no wonder that more than 7.4 million tourists visit each year, adding more than $1 billion in spending/revenue to the local economies. Marin and Sonoma Counties are also part of the dynamic San Francisco Bay Metropolitan Area that offers residents and visitors easy access to virtually unlimited shopping, dining, cultural and recreational opportunities.

In addition to the wine industry, the counties of Marin and Sonoma and the many cities and towns within the counties' region, other major employers include a number of dairies & farms (many that are organic), medical/healthcare services such as Kaiser, Marin General Hospital, Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital, Sutter Memorial Hospital and Arterial Vascular Engineering to name a few, as well as advanced educational institutions such as the College of Marin, Novato Community College, Marin Community College, Santa Rosa Junior College, Dominican University of California, and Sonoma State University. Additional major employers include AutoDesk Inc, Fireman's Fund Insurance, the US Coast Guard and many more. With its strategic location, natural and cultural resources, history of responsible land use planning and attractive quality of life, Marin and Sonoma Counties offer their residents the ideal mix of country living and big city amenities.

# Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District

Initially known as the Marin Mosquito Abatement District (MAD) when formed in 1915, MAD became the first District in California. In 1995 the name of the District was changed to the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District (MSMVCD) and additional services were offered to the community. Five years later the District office was moved to the City of Cotati where it remains today. In 2005 voters approved annexation of the unincorporated areas of Marin and Sonoma Counties that has allowed for services to be available to all residents of the two counties.

The Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District works cooperatively with regulatory agencies and the Cities and Counties within the District boundaries to minimize the potential for mosquito production, other vectors and public health issues through the abatement of vertebrate and invertebrate vectors. Some key programs include surveillance, control, education, interagency cooperation and legislation.

The MSMVCD serves the approximately 740,000 residents in an area of nearly 2100 square miles. The District is governed by a Board of Trustees representing twenty (20) Cities and two (2) Counties in the District service area. This includes one representative for each city and four representatives (two for each county) selected by the respective County Board of Supervisors to represent the unincorporated and newly annexed portions of the District. The Board in turn appoints the District Manager who is responsible for the overall day-to-day management of the MSMVCD, a staff averaging between 35-40 and an annual budget (2010-2011) of over $8.3 million.

California Independent Special Districts like the MSMVCD are funded by a small annual service charge assessed on all non-exempt land parcels in the service area. Like other forms of local government, the districts are audited and subject to state and local oversight. Marin and Sonoma county homeowners living within the district boundaries typically are assessed a public assessment of $10.72 to $19.36 annually per single family equivalent for mosquito and vector control.

Prior to 1978 and the passage of Proposition 13, the Health and Safety code allowed mosquito control districts to set a tax rate sufficient to fund their proposed budget. Since Proposition 13, the District, like other public entities, receives a share of the 1% general county property tax, equivalent to its share in 1975 (the year Proposition 13 set as the starting point). In 1996, the District's Board of Directors formed a Benefit Assessment District, in order to retain the ability to continue funding the program at a level necessary to protect the health and maintain the living standard of area residents.

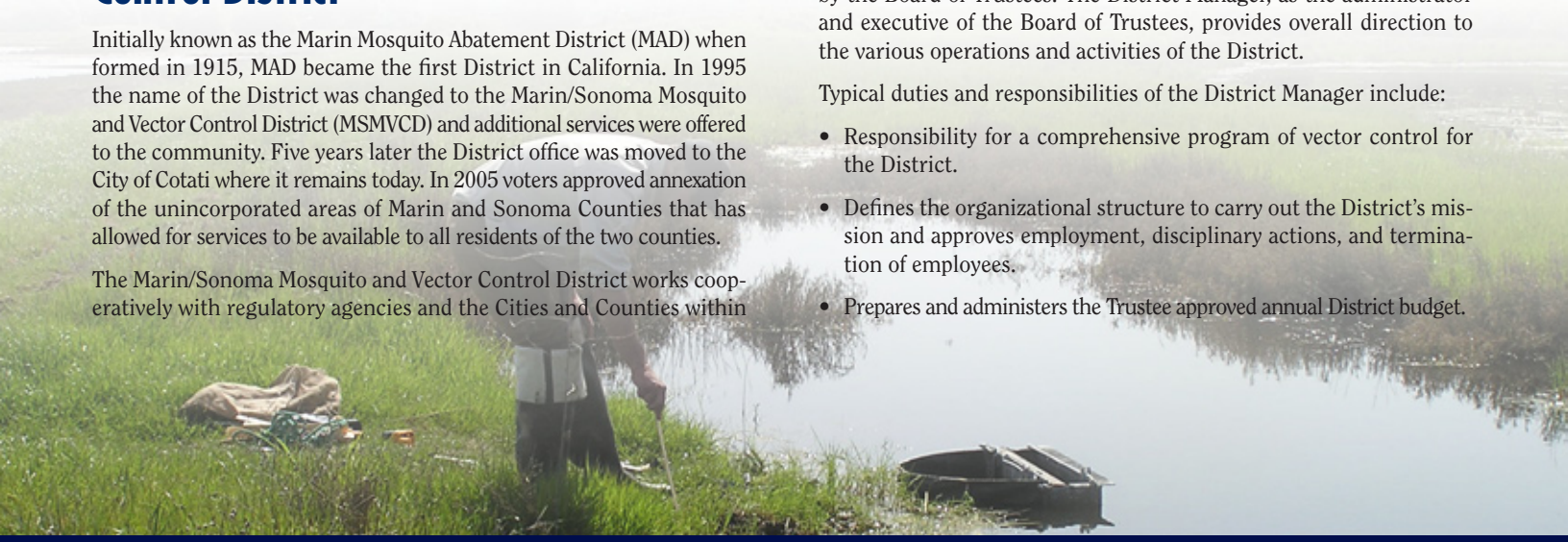
Due to the excellent management and monitoring of the MSMVCD by the Board and the current District Manager, the District has been able to operate with annual balanced budgets and to develop reasonable reserves for planned and unexpected future expenditures.

# The District Manager

The District Manager is selected, appointed by and reports to the Board of Trustees. He/she is responsible for the overall planning, organization and direction of the MSMVCD with policy direction from the Board. The District Manager is also given the authority to hire all necessary staff. The authority of the District is derived from the California State Health and Safety Code and the District's general policies are determined by the Board of Trustees. The District Manager, as the administrator and executive of the Board of Trustees, provides overall direction to the various operations and activities of the District.

Typical duties and responsibilities of the District Manager include:

- Responsibility for a comprehensive program of vector control for the District.
- Defines the organizational structure to carry out the District's mission and approves employment, disciplinary actions, and termination of employees.
- Prepares and administers the Trustee approved annual District budget.



- Maintains an accurate and professional accounting system and budgetary controls over expenditures.
- Evaluates program operations, confers with supervisors regarding progress and problems and provides consultation and assistance as required, as well as direct special studies as required in problem areas.
- Develops short and long range operational programs and operations policies subject to Board approval, and ensures the development of operations procedures that conform to District policies and to all applicable laws and regulations.
- Ensures the periodic survey and study of vector occurrence and problems in the District.
- Stays informed of technical and scientific research that may improve vector control in the District and incorporates new techniques and practices into the program(s) when appropriate.
- Confers with attorneys and secures legal assistance as needed; prepares complaints, including documentation and evidence on public nuisances, for action by the Board of Trustees and the District's Legal Counsel. Ensures compliance of District services with legal requirements.
- Ensures that all necessary governmental regulatory requirements are prepared and submitted on time.
- Works with the District Public Relations Director and department heads to plan and develop public relations and community education programs, communicate effectively with media and district residents, provide appropriate information for release to the news media, and support school educational programs related to vector control.
- Keeps informed of the latest developments in vector control and related fields; cooperates with public agencies and private organizations to stimulate projects favorable to the prevention and control of vectors; reviews professional literature and actively participates in programs of relevant professional organizations.
- Attends all Board of Trustee meetings and, along with the Board President, prepares Board of Trustee meeting agendas and other documents required for Board meetings.
- Serves as liaison agent for the Board of Trustees with subordinate personnel and other parties.
- Keeps the Board informed of ongoing activities and significant circumstances or occurrences.
- Assumes other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the Board of Trustees.

As the chief executive for the MSMVCD, the District Manager is responsible for a staff that averages at 35-40. The current District staff includes thirty five (35) employees. They are: the Manager, Assistant Manager/Vector Ecologist, Financial/Benefits Manager, Receptionist, Assistant Vector Ecologist , 3 Biologists, Fish Culturist, Public Relations Director, Network Administrator, Community Education Specialist, 3 Field Supervisors, Special Projects Supervisor, Shop Facilities Coordinator, Assistant Shop Mechanic and 17 Vector Control Technicians.

In addition to their scheduled duties, District Technicians respond to approximately 1500 service requests from the public each year. Many other requests are handled by office staff at the time of initial contact, and an additional number (estimated to be an equal number of calls) are handled without ever having to make a service request.

## Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

Opportunities, issues, and challenges for the District Manger include the following:

- Evaluate the MSMVCD's services and delivery structure to ensure efficient operations, regulatory compliance, quality management, and superior service delivery.
- Continue to strengthen partnerships and cooperation within the Counties, Cities, State, Federal and local agencies and organizations as they relate to quality management and service delivery.
- Ensure District compliance with all legal and safety requirements affecting vector control activities and the use of pesticides.
- Address differing public perceptions of the District's services, especially related to pesticide use.
- Seek out and evaluate additional opportunities for funding including grants, special program/service funding, and contracting/consulting opportunities.
- Maintain the spirit of transparency and accountability established as a founding principle of the Board of Trustees and MSMVCD.
- Promote the District's model of inclusive, collaborative management.
- Continue to support the mission of the MSMVCD which is to protect the health and comfort of the public through abatement of vertebrate and invertebrate vectors while maintaining quality, safety, cost-effectiveness, accountability and leadership to its public-centered programs.

## The Candidate

### *Education and Experience*

- Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree including major course work in public administration, business administration, public health, entomology, biology or related field and a minimum of five years of experience in the field of vector control, city/county government or related field.
- An additional two years of responsible supervisorial/management experience is also preferred.
- An advanced degree in management or relevant science is not required but would also be a significant plus.
- Possession of, or the ability to obtain within two years, a Certification by the California Department of Health Services as a Certified Technician in Vector Control and Terrestrial Vertebrate Vector is required.

- The successful candidate must also have or be able to obtain a valid California Drivers License and be insurable under the guidelines set by the District's insurance carrier.

### *Knowledge, Skills and Abilities*

The successful candidate should have strong management leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills. The ideal person should demonstrate significant expertise in:

- Local government, special district, or similar private sector organizations.
- Public relations, and have excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Principles and practices used in operational management, government/public sector compliance, legal services, budget and finance, risk management, regulatory affairs, and human resources.
- Building and maintaining productive, cordial relationships with local cities, counties, community groups, local agencies and the public.
- Hiring, developing, training and retaining a superior staff of professionals who believe in quality, responsibility, and public service.
- Innovating and developing good approaches and solutions in a changing environment.
- Working with and providing timely and relevant information and clear recommendations to a Board of Directors or Board of Trustees.

### *Management Style and Personal Traits*

The ideal candidate will be a creative leader and straight forward thinker who has a collaborative work style, and a commitment to quality public services.

He/She should be someone who is able to work well under pressure, meet deadlines, and adjust to changing priorities; be an active listener, supportive team builder; have strong interpersonal and communication skills; and demonstrate an energetic management style.

This person should also be a leader who embraces challenge, is open minded, accountable, thinks collaboratively and is comfortable working in a complex public service organization.

The selected individual must also have a high degree of integrity, be facilitative rather than confrontational in nature, understand the importance of compliance and be an advocate of public health safety and quality services.

Finally this person should be able to interact well and comfortably with individuals of various ethnic, social, cultural and economic backgrounds and be able to approach challenges with confidence.

## Compensation

The salary range for this position is open and will be competitive and commensurate with experience. The MSMVCD also offers an excellent fringe benefits package including paid vacation, holidays, sick, personal and management leave, medical, dental, disability and life insurance, a deferred compensation plan, and a retirement plan. Details are available upon request.

## How to Apply

This search is open until filled. It is, however, the intention of the Board of Trustees to be screening leading candidates in July and to hold interviews with the most qualified candidates in July to early August, 2011. If you are interested in this outstanding opportunity, please submit a detailed resume and salary history with a letter of interest and contact information as soon as possible to:

Robert Neher, President or
Rahn Sibley, Vice President

**Neher & Associates**

299 Westlake Drive
Suite 200
West Sacramento, CA 95605

Telephone: (916) 443-2421
Facsimile: (916) 443-5949

Applications are preferred electronically at:

robertneher@executivesearchneher.com

Should you have any questions with regard to your own interest, or a recommendation of a colleague, please contact us at the numbers above.

Resumes received will be reviewed in accordance with the criteria outlined in this brochure and candidates with the most relevant qualifications and experience will be contacted for additional discussion and screening.

***The MSMVCD is an Equal Opportunity Employer.***