



Wastewater Infrastructure Improvements

The Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2023 (House Report 117-400) directed the Forest Service to provide a report on wastewater treatment facilities that are scheduled for replacement, including the Bolar Mountain Wastewater Treatment Facility within the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, and how higher construction costs have impacted project estimates.

Wastewater Treatment Facilities Scheduled for Replacement

Wastewater treatment facilities owned and maintained by the U.S. Forest Service include lagoons, advanced treatment systems, and packaged treatment units. There are currently three wastewater treatment facilities on National Forest System lands that are scheduled for replacement. These are the Bolar Mountain Recreation Area wastewater treatment facility on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests; the New Waverly Office wastewater treatment facility on the National Forests in Texas; and the Palisades Lagoon wastewater treatment facility on the Coronado National Forest.

The Bolar Mountain wastewater treatment facility is currently in the design phase with completion of the new design estimated to be between July and September 2023. Construction is expected to begin after September 2023 and completed by October 2026.

The New Waverly Office wastewater treatment facility is currently under construction and is scheduled to be completed by the end of September 2023.

The Palisades Lagoon wastewater treatment facility is currently in the design phase. Construction is expected to begin the summer of 2023 and is scheduled to be completed by October 2024.

How Higher Construction Costs Have Impacted Project Estimates

Higher construction costs have a direct impact on project estimates. Inflation-driven increases in material and labor costs have been a contributing factor in increased project costs. The potential for higher project costs was accounted for during the government estimate for the construction contract of the New Waverly Office wastewater treatment facility and did not prevent the agency from awarding the contract for its construction. It is not yet known if there will be higher than expected project costs for the Bolar Mountain or Palisades Lagoon wastewater treatment facilities since these projects are still in the design phase and not yet advertised.