

Taos Ski Valley village proposes wastewater facility expansion

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The village of Taos Ski Valley is asking for public comments on a proposal to expand and upgrade its existing wastewater treatment facility.

The 30-year-old facility treats waste from most businesses and homes at the Ski Valley. Village administrator Mark Fratrack told *The Taos News* the expansion is meant to update the facility and provide some redundancy.

Treated effluent is discharged into the Rio Hondo and must meet water quality standards.

The facility is currently rated to treat up to 167,000 gallons of waste per day. Fratrack said at peak times, the facility handles about 120,000 gallons. Even with the addition of the 80-room Blake Hotel this winter, Fratrack said the current facility should be adequate.

Fratrack said the primary purpose of the proposed upgrade is not necessarily to increase capacity (though the new design would handle up to 310,000 gallons a day), but is instead to replace obsolete equipment and install two “trains” that would provide a redundant system in the case of a failure.

“It’s not a capacity issue,” Fratrack said. “It’s how much flow can we get through the plant. I guess you could say the straw is too small.”

Fratrack said the proposed facility would be located in the same place — on the west end of the resort parking lots — and would have a slightly larger footprint.

While the construction of the hotel is not expected to max out the existing facility’s capacity, the resort is in the midst of a decade-long renovation that is likely to include the construction of more businesses and residential units. Fratrack said it’s hard to pin down just how much that anticipated construction might add to the waste volume.

The wastewater upgrade is expected to cost \$6 million. Fratrack said the village received a \$500,000 grant/loan from a state water revolving fund.

He said the village would likely borrow the rest. The village is obligated to follow federal environmental guidelines for the project, Fratrack said.

Fratrack said the village would like to begin construction next summer.

Waste from the resort has been a point of contention between Taos Ski Valley and downstream water users for decades.

Colorado-based SE Group, an environmental consulting firm, held a meeting in Taos Ski Valley last month to explain the project and take questions and comments.

Residents of Valdez, Arroyo Hondo and Des Montes expressed concerns about water quality and the quantity of water that the new facility would use.

“We can not do with less water for our farms,” said Floyd Archuleta, a Des Montes farmer, in an email to *The Taos News* .

Documents related to the project can be found at the village offices.

For more information, contact Ashley Smith with SE Group at asmith@segroup.com or (970) 262-4345.

Resort in midst of a decade-long renovation



The village of Taos Ski Valley is moving to expand its 30-year-old wastewater treatment facility. The village says the expansion is necessary to replace obsolete equipment, but downstream water users are worried about growth at the resort and the impact it might have on water quality and quantity.

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