



LAKE SIDE

WATER & SEWER

Wastewater Facility Upgrade: Project Overview & Fact Sheet

Project Kickoff

- The Wastewater Facility upgrade project began in **June 2021 (4 years ago)**, prior to rising inflation, developer requests, or Flathead County involvement
- The District **projected 2.5% annual growth**, but those projections shifted significantly beginning in 2020
- What began as a \$4 million holding pond proposal escalated to \$12 million due to updated DEQ regulations implemented in 2019
- Site limitations rendered the use of ponds both impractical and environmentally unsound
- LCWSD adopted a **modern & proven treatment solution, custom-engineered** for the site by top professionals in the field

Project Objectives

- Address aging infrastructure by replacing the **40-year-old treatment system** with modern and proven technology
- Ensure **long-term environmental protection** and system capacity through:
 - Modern & proven treatment technology designed for long-term reliability
 - Improved protection for Flathead Lake and surrounding ecosystems
 - Year-round discharge capabilities to accommodate seasonal variations
 - Infrastructure that supports responsible community growth

Phase 1 Construction (Grant-Funded)

Status: 20% complete | Construction began about 3 months ago

Estimated Completion: Spring 2026 (Phase 1) | Mid-2027 (New Treatment Plant)

Lift Station #10 Upgrades - Lakeside Blvd.

- Flood-resistant design
- Upgraded access for maintenance and safety
- New pumps and emergency generator
- **Estimated Completion:** Spring 2026

Headworks Building

- New screening system with built-in redundancy
- Grit removal for improved system efficiency
- Odor control measures with a biofilter system
- **Estimated Completion:** Spring 2026

Septage Receiving Facility

- Enclosed building with odor control and a biofilter
- Includes a potable well and integrated screening system
- **Lift station and piping** will pump **screened septage** to the **new headworks**, where it will be **mixed with regular household wastewater** before entering the **new modern & proven treatment plant**. There, it will be **treated to DEQ permit levels** before discharge into **existing farm field irrigation** or the new **natural soil infiltration** system.
- **Estimated Construction Completion:** Spring 2026
- **Operational Target:** Mid-2027 (after Phase 2 plant completion)

Phase 2 Planning

- **Currently in progress**
- **Includes:** New treatment facility and supporting infrastructure
- **Rate study underway:** The rate study for the full completion of Phase 2 is currently in progress; however, it cannot be finalized until the **facility plan is approved** and **construction bids** for Phase 2 are received. This is **standard practice**.
- **Want to learn more?**
- Join us at the next **LCWSD Board Meeting** to stay informed and engaged in the planning process

Territory 1889/Discovery Land Developer Agreement

Background

- Originally approved in 2006 (Eagles Crest / Lakeside Club) for **800–1,000 homes**
- Project was delayed following the **2009 housing market crash**

Current Agreement

- In addition to system development fees, the developer will cover **100% of the \$23 million cost** for essential sewer infrastructure upgrades to the aging 40-year-old system.
 - ~ **25,000 feet** of new sewer mainline
 - Upgrades or replacement of Lift Stations 1, 3, and 5
 - Construction of a new Lift Station 4

Community Win

- This major infrastructure investment by the developer **reduces the future financial burden on ratepayers**

Septage Agreement

- **Septage agreement finalized, grant funding secured** and facility **currently under construction**

Benefits to Ratepayers:

- **Secured grant funding** to support construction costs of phase 1
- **Future tipping fees from septage haulers** will provide ongoing revenue, helping to **offset operational expenses** and **stabilize rates**.

Rate Increases

Rate adjustments are necessary to support the long-term operation and maintenance of the upgraded wastewater system. Funds will help cover:

- **Increased electricity costs** due to modern treatment processes
- **Additional staff** required to operate and maintain new facilities
- **Increased wages** due to advanced licensing requirements needed to operate the new plant
- **Enhanced sampling and regulatory reporting requirements**
- **Debt service** on infrastructure improvements
- **Building a responsible reserve fund** for future system needs

Protecting Flathead Lake

The new modern and proven treatment facility is designed to significantly enhance water quality and environmental protection.

Key Improvements:

- **85% increase in treatment effectiveness**
- **The addition of:**
 - **Advanced mechanical treatment, and**
 - **Natural soil infiltration (via ground water discharge permit) allows for cleaner, year-round discharge**
 - **Improved odor control**

Innovation & Lake Legacy

- In the **1970s**, Flathead Lake faced **elevated phosphorus pollution** caused by widespread septic system use around the shoreline.
- The creation of **local Sewer Districts**, paired with **advancements in modern treatment technology**, has been essential to **improving and stabilizing water quality** for more than **40 years**.

Legal Action & Cost to Ratepayers

- The District has incurred **significant legal expenses** due to litigation filed by **Citizens for a Better Flathead** and one individual ratepayer.
- Despite the lawsuit, **no viable alternative solution has been proposed**.
- While not explicitly advocating for septic systems, their efforts to **block District growth and infrastructure upgrades** would, in effect, result in continued reliance on **individual septic systems**—which are **more prone to nutrient leakage and groundwater contamination**, and **less environmentally sustainable** over the long term.
- **While some may view a location one mile from the lake as too close, we respectfully disagree**. Many established wastewater treatment facilities are located directly on lakes or rivers to allow for convenient discharge directly into the waterway. For example:
 - Whitefish – Whitefish River
 - Columbia Falls – Flathead River
 - Bigfork – Flathead Lake
 - Kalispell – Ashley Creek
 - Hungry Horse – South Fork Flathead River
 - Polson – Flathead River
 - Yellow Bay Bio Station – Flathead Lake

LCWSD's facility, by contrast, is **set back a full mile** — providing both environmental buffer and operational flexibility.

Stay Connected

- **Website:** LCWSD.com - Project updates, meeting info, and more
- **Social Media:** Follow us on **Facebook** and **Instagram** for news and reminders
- **Have Questions?**
 - Schedule a meeting with our General Manager, **Rodney Olson** – we're here to help!

Let's Work Together

At LCWSD, we're committed to:

- **Environmental responsibility** – Protecting Flathead Lake and our local ecosystems
- **Transparent communication** – Keeping our community informed and involved
- **Community-first values** – Making decisions that prioritize the people we serve

Together, we can build a sustainable future for Lakeside and beyond.

Please join us for our monthly Board meeting on THURSDAY, August 21st at the Lakeside Quick Response Unit located at 201 Bills Road at 2:00 PM to learn more about the Wastewater Treatment Facility Project.