

standards. This will require constant monitoring of the waters upstream and downstream of the facility. If a facility can demonstrate the waterway is equally healthy in both locations, then it can ask the WQCD to allow it to continue to treat wastewater with no additional plant modifications. This could prevent a facility from having to make a costly investment in new equipment.

Regulation 85 still mandates the installation of new nutrient removal technology over the next 10 years for the 44 facilities. Original cost estimates to comply with this regulation ranged between \$2.4 billion and \$25 billion; in 10 years, the numbers could be vastly different.

The equipment that can clean to those 2022 numeric interim values "hasn't been invented yet, unless you count reverse osmosis, which is extremely expensive," says Mike Wicklund, Monument Sanitation District manager.

The state is hoping that by making the regulation effective 10 years from now, less costly technology will become available to address nutrients.

Newly built facilities will not enjoy the 10-year delay in Regulation 85 and will be required to immediately comply with Regulation 31's 2022 numbers.

#### The local effect

The Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility, which Wicklund's district owns along with Palmer Lake Sanitation District and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, is one of the

44 treatment facilities—out of 319 total in the state—affected by Regulation 85. Each of these 44 facilities can treat more than 2 million gallons per day. Together, they produce 75 percent of the treated effluent released into Colorado's waters.

The smaller facilities will have to begin meeting the Regulation 31 standards in 2022. They include the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility, which is owned by Donala Water and Sanitation District, the Triview and Forest Lakes Metropolitan Districts, and the Academy Water and Sanitation District, which has a small lagoon system wastewater treatment facility. Academy, which is already facing decisions about how its lagoons will meet previously approved ammonia standards, will have to determine how to pay for phosphorus and nitrogen treatment.

Wicklund said a "watershed

monitoring group," composed of facilities throughout the Fountain Creek watershed, has been formed by the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments. This group is developing plans for regularly monitoring state waters in the watershed. That will involve sampling along Monument Creek, Fountain Creek, and their tributaries, from Palmer Lake all the way to the confluence with the Arkansas River in Pueblo.

"We'll know about the algae on the rocks in those streams, and how much phosphorus and nitrogen is in that water," Wicklund said. "Then, when our permit is up, we will be able to develop cost-effective discharge permit limits based on studies of the watershed and ask for site-specific limits for each individual treatment facility."

For now, Wicklund's predicted \$100-a-month increase in wastewater rates is not imminent. However, the unknown



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