



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Bend National Park
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Big Bend National Park News Release

Big Bend National Park Seeks Public Comment on New Wastewater Treatment System in Chisos Basin

The National Park Service (NPS) proposes to replace an existing wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) that serves the Chisos Basin developed area. The project is proposed to protect public health, avoid disruption of sanitary sewer service and to upgrade the wastewater treatment system's operational capacity and efficiency. The NPS is beginning an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project. To initiate the EA process, and solicit issues, concerns, and questions pertinent to the EA, the NPS is holding a 30-day public comment period.

Built in 1973, the existing treatment plant is perched on a slope at the northwest edge of the Chisos Basin campground. Signs of age and stress are evident. Visitors to the adjacent campground complain of the noise and odor emanating from the facility. The proposal seeks to address the deteriorating condition of the treatment plant and improve the visitor experience by replacing the existing system and relocating it, along with necessary utilities, to the site of existing evaporation ponds northwest of the campground.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act to communicate a planning process that: 1) explores the proposal and a reasonable range of alternatives to meet project objectives, 2) evaluates potential issues and impacts to Park resources and values, and 3) identifies mitigation measures to lessen the degree or extent of impacts. The EA also assesses effects upon cultural resources, in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The NPS encourages public participation in the process.

The 30-day public scoping/comment period begins August 29, 2008, and ends September 28, 2008. Comments will be reviewed and considered in preparation of the Draft Environmental Assessment .

Comments may be made during the open period at the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website, <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bibe>, or may be sent to: Superintendent, Attn: Basin Wastewater EA, P.O. Box 129, Big Bend National Park, Texas, 79834

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

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