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News Feature | December 2, 2014

Fracking Boom Drives Wastewater Treatment Boom

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(<http://vertassets.blob.core.windows.net/image/8d43bc88/8d43bc88-b509-40e8-91e9-b2c704e53281/fracking.jpg>)

The amount that the fracking industry spends on wastewater treatment is expected to go way up.

A new paper (<http://bluefieldresearch.com/water-for-fracking-2014/>) by Bluefield Research says the number will rise from \$138 million this year to \$357 million in 2020, which is almost triple.

In total, the fracking industry will spend \$6.38 billion on water management in 2014, the report said. That includes water supply, transport, storage, treatment, and disposal.

Transport is the biggest chunk of the water management spending. "The increasing cost of transport and injecting water into wells— now accounting for 66% of water services spending— and the improving cost structures of treatment provide another driver of reuse," Bluefield said in a release (<http://bluefieldresearch.com/news/>) about the report.

Reese Tisdale, president of Bluefield Research, explained the key marketplace conditions.

"Fracking has been the wild west for the U.S. water industry," he said. "There are three reasons for this— first, there has been an explosive build-out of fracking well installations, now surpassing 126,000. Second, there has been a lack of clear regulation on water management in key markets. And third, there is not a one-size-fits-all treatment solution for fracking, meaning solutions providers have had to ascend a steep learning curve to treat the variable wastewaters that a single well is capable of producing."

Previous research papers have highlighted fracking water reuse as a practice in the best interest of industry.

"A Ceres research paper last year recommended that hydraulic fracturing operations should scale up their use of recycled water and non-freshwater resources (<http://www.environmentalleader.com/2013/05/03/fracking-should-use-more-recycled-water-ceres-says/>), and practice better water management planning if shale energy production is to grow as projected," according to (<http://www.environmentalleader.com/2014/11/06/fracking-wastewater-treatment-spending-to-triple/#ixzz3IXW5vQi2>) a news report in *Environmental Leader*.

For more on fracking water issues, check out Water Online's Produced Water Solution Center (<http://www.wateronline.com/produced-water-treatment>).

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