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[Previous](#) | [Next](#)  
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*By Daniel Tyree McElrath / STAFF*

It is conceivable that a visit to a wastewater treatment plant might soon constitute a pleasant outing.

That's because the Johns Creek Environmental Campus, a new water reclamation facility or WRF under construction in Roswell, is designed as a needed water processing plant, but also as an educational center.

The brainchild of the late Bob Fulton, former Fulton County commissioner, Johns Creek Environmental Campus is a \$137 million facility being built on 43 acres on Holcomb Bridge Road near Garrard's Landing and adjacent to the Chattahoochie River. It will replace the Johns Creek Water Pollution Control Plant, which is overtaxed and becoming obsolete. Using a cutting edge system known as a membrane biological reactor (MSB), Johns Creek Environmental Campus will offer both increased capacity – 15 million gallons per day – and a higher standard of results. The facility is needed to accommodate North Fulton's swelling population while ensuring the health of the Chattahoochee.

The reuse water produced will be cleaner, protecting the river while also being available for use for irrigation. The new facility will be the largest operating MBR in the nation. Essentially, MBR uses a membrane to filter bacteria from wastewater. Such a system is already in use at Fulton's Cauley Creek WRF.

In addition to the technology, what is most interesting is that the plant will function as an educational tool, providing interactive learning for local students on matters of ecology and water conservation. Students will be able to learn how the plant functions, why it is necessary and how it benefits the Chattahoochee ecosystem.

The actual plant will occupy only 10 acres of the site. Designers were very careful to consider the concerns of nearby residents when planning the facility. The plant will be surrounded by a park-like setting with berms constructed to obscure the view of the actual plant. Architecture is designed to dovetail with existing development. Strict noise and odor controls are incorporated into the design, too.

The construction, which began in October of 2006, is expected to take 40 months and is currently on schedule to be completed in 2009. On a recent visit to the site, Archer Western Contractors' trucks, cranes, bulldozers and concrete mixers were all in operation.

As part of the plan, Johns Creek Environmental Campus designers and contractors have promised to use a water truck to keep down dust and streetsweepers to keep the roadways clean. However, despite efforts to

minimize the site's impact, traffic congestion may be an unavoidable issue due to the project's size and existing traffic conditions in Roswell.

The Johns Creek Water Pollution Control Plant, located in the Horseshoe Bend subdivision, has reached the end of its service life and would require significant investment to keep up to regulatory standards. When the Johns Creek Environmental Campus comes on line, the Water Pollution Control Plant will be decommissioned, though a pump station will remain at the site.

&nbsp; [Previous](#) | [Next](#)

&nbsp; [Back to top](#)