



News Release

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Scaled Down Desal Project Moves Forward

Palm Coast, Fla. – The Coquina Coast Seawater Desalination Project is moving forward as a scaled-down 10-15 million gallon per day (mgd) facility to come on line by 2020. The cities of Palm Coast, Leesburg and Deland along with St. Johns County and St. Johns River Water Management District are continuing the investigation of seawater desalination as an alternative water supply to meet future demand.

“Desalination remains a viable option to meeting our future water needs,” said Richard Adams, City of Palm Coast public works director. “The potential for an environmentally sound, drought-proof alternative that diversifies our water supply is worth continued analysis.”

The project, originally under investigation to meet the future water needs of 11 cities and counties, was projected to produce 25 mgd in its initial phase. However, revised demand projections that reflect the economic slowdown and long-term conservation show water utilities need less water later than originally estimated.

With more time to address smaller projected shortfalls in supply, some water providers opted out of the desalination project to focus on long-term demand management strategies. The future water needs of other former project participants, such as Bunnell, Flagler Beach and Flagler County, are being accounted for in the City of Palm Coast’s demand projections.

“For a utility with very little future demand, it’s more economical to purchase water from a larger user,” explained Adams. “For others, they now have time to examine ways to more efficiently use their existing supplies.”

Project engineers estimate the capital cost of a 10-15 mgd plant would be between \$180 million and \$234 million, depending on location, source water quality, regulatory requirements and more. The average unit cost from the facility is estimated to be between \$5.35 and \$6.10 per 1,000 gallons of desalinated water. Cost estimates will be refined in the next phase of study.

Should demand increase, a desalination facility would be designed and constructed to accommodate future expansion.

Seawater desalination is under investigation because future groundwater withdrawals in the region will be limited to protect the environment and ensure a sustainable resource. Alternative water supplies must be developed to reduce reliance on groundwater supplies and to meet the public’s future drinking water needs.

For more information on the Coquina Coast Seawater Desalination Project, go to www.coquinacoastdesal.org.

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