PALM SPRINGS TURF BENEFITS FROM REUSE PROJECT

Golf courses and parks in Palm Springs, CA are benefiting from Desert Water Agency's (DWA) new six-million-dollar water reclamation facility which was officially dedicated late last year.

The first phase of this technologically advanced facility has a capacity of five million gallons per day. It went on-line in September 1988. Future addition of two more filter units will increase the capacity to 15 million gallons per day.

F. Gillar Boyd, Jr., DWA's board president, pointed out that using water twice by reclaiming wastewater for use in irrigating golf courses, parks, and greenbelts is a major community commitment to water conservation.

"The benefits of reuse are significant: It will help preserve our high-quality groundwater; it will reduce nitrate infiltration into our groundwater supply; and it will conserve energy," Boyd explained.

Edith Spitzer, DWA's vice president and water conservation committee chair, expressed the agency's appreciation to the State Water Resource Control Board for its assistance in obtaining a two-million-dollar loan which helped fund the project.

"I believe that DWA's excellent, long-term water conservation activities helped us get the loan," Spitzer said.

Three users (two golf courses and a city park) are now on-line, and six additional potential water-reuse sites have been identified, according to Jack H. Oberle, DWA's general manager.

"The 12-acre site has been landscaped as a water-efficient landscape laboratory, where we can continue our evaluations of plant materials, irrigation technology, and operations and maintenance techniques," Oberle said.

"Additionally, a three-acre area on the east end of the site has been set aside for a joint research project with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service to study the effects of reclaimed water on water-efficient plants. Planting is scheduled for the spring of 1989," Oberle added.

A nitrogen uptake study is also being planned, with guidance from the University of California Cooperative Extension Service, to determine the reduction of nitrogen infiltration to the groundwater when using reclaimed water on turf.

Reclaimed water is being sold at $120 per acre foot, which is half DWA's domestic water rate and is competitive with private well operational costs.

The DWA and the City of Palm Springs coordinate sewage treatment operations, with the city providing secondary treatment and DWA providing tertiary treatment to produce unrestricted-use irrigation water.

"These projects do not happen overnight," Boyd said, referring to the planning, regulatory agencies' requirements, environmental reviews, pilot studies, economic analysis, funding, design, bidding and construction process.

SAN FRANCISCO PARKS CUT WATER 40 PERCENT

More than 200 parks and five golf courses in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park District have been placed on a 60 percent water allotment, says park superintendent Barney Barron. The cutback is based on the amount of water stored in the city's reservoirs. While snowfall this winter in the Sierras was greater than last, it did not restore the reservoirs to a level needed for full park water use.

"The parks will be going brown a little earlier this year and staying brown longer," Barron predicted, "and golfers will be getting more roll." Irrigation on the golf courses will be restricted to tees and greens.

Barron will try to give Candlestick Park its normal allotment by conserving water at other locations. "There are too many contractual obligations at Candlestick to risk the turf," he explained.