

## 5 golf courses in Delray to switch to reclaimed water

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Delray Beach Municipal Golf Club will be the first golf course in Delray Beach to use reclaimed water for irrigation, the first of five golf courses slated for a possible changeover.

By June, pipes will be connected to the main line from the South Central Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, said Dan Beatty, deputy director of public utilities for the city.

The plant, at 1801 N. Congress Ave. in Delray Beach, is shared with Boynton Beach. It receives 17 million gallons of sewage daily. A fourth of that is treated and reused as wastewater. "The rest goes out into the sea," said Dennis Coates, director of operations.

Wastewater will be pumped from the treatment plant to the golf course, where it will flow into the lake and remain there until needed for irrigation.

Changing over from well to reclaimed water has been a three-year project and is part of a larger, ongoing plan that will take a decade to implement. Beatty says when it is finished, five golf courses in Delray Beach will be irrigated with wastewater as long as there is a source of money.

The cost of the changeover at the Delray Beach Municipal Golf Club is more than \$5 million. When the Hamlet Country Club, Delaire Country Club, Sherwood Park Golf Club and Lakeview Golf Club are changed over to wastewater, the total cost for all five golf courses will be more than \$16.5 million.

The city has proposed ways to pay for the plan, including connection fees that builders pay when they start a new development, new capital funding, state and federal grants and bond financing, if necessary, Beatty said.

Quail Ridge Country Club in Boynton Beach has been using reclaimed water to irrigate the golf course greens for seven years.

Ed Miller, golf course superintendent, says it is the smartest thing they've done.

The country club pays 28 cents per 1,000 gallons, compared to the well water that previously irrigated the course, which had no cost aside from the electricity used to pump it in. But environmentally it has been good, Miller said.

"They do a good job at the water plant," he said.

Reclaimed water has been used on the west coast of Florida for 30 years, according to Coates.

"We haven't had the need, but in the last 10 years, the population of South Florida

has exploded far beyond estimates, and we have to look at alternatives to provide adequate water," Coates said.

Beatty says a cost benefit analysis determined it will cost \$1 per 1,000 gallons to treat and transport wastewater from the treatment plant. The figure includes the city's cost for maintenance on the pipes.

Although it depends on the weather and other factors, a golf course here commonly uses 500,000 to 750,000 gallons of water a day, Beatty said.

One of the benefits of using wastewater is that there are no watering restrictions even during periods of drought, so the golf courses using wastewater are always green and lush, Beatty said

People think it has a bad odor, but it's well water that smells because hydrogen sulfide gas naturally seeps in from the ground. Well water frequently has a high mineral content and can stain clothes, he added.

The Hamlet Country Club is scheduled to be next, according to Ivan Ladizinski, public information officer for the city.

Robin Goodell, golf superintendent at the Hamlet, is enthusiastic about the prospect of using wastewater to irrigate the course, but he said no contracts have been signed yet.

"You have to handle the water a little differently," he said, citing a salt adjustment.

But he thinks it will be worth the effort. The club uses well water now.

"It's an excellent water alternative," he said. "We are interested in the future of South Florida."