RECLAMATION Managing Water in the West

Desalination and Water Purification Research and Development Program Report No. 120

Dewvaporation Desalination 5,000-Gallon-Per-Day Pilot Plant

U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation Contract C

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

OMB No. 0704-0188

Desalination and Water Purification Research and Development Program Report No. 120

Dewvaporation Desalination 5,000-Gallon-Per-Day Pilot Plant

Prepared for Reclamation Under Agreement No. 03-FC-81-0905

by

James R. Beckman

L'Eau LLC Tempe, Arizona

U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation Technical Service Center Water and Environmental Resources Division Water Treatment Engineering Research Team Denver, Colorado June 2008

MISSION STATEMENTS

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian tribes and our commitments to island communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Acknowledgments

This work was initially supported by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation under Agreements No. 98-FC-81-0049 and 99-FC-81-0186. The engineering team wishes to thank Ms. Michelle Chapman (Reclamation - Denver), Mr. Thomas Poulson (Reclamation - Phoenix), Mr. William Cosgrove (Reclamation - Phoenix) and Mr. Henry Day (City of Phoenix) for their support, encouragement, and suggestions.

The principal investigator, along with the engineering team of Mr. Victor Banks, Mr. Joshua Brown, Mr. Michael Dorr, Mr. George Finnegan, and Mr. Stephen Poplawski also wish to express their appreciation for the patience needed throughout this initially anticipated 2-year program.

Disclaimer

The views, analysis, recommendations, and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not represent official or unofficial policies or opinions of the United States Government, and the United States takes no position with regard to any findings, conclusions, or recommendations made. As such, mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the United States Government.

Table of Contents

Page

Table of Contents

Appendices

- B City of Phoenix Water Analysis
- C Metric Conversions

List of Tables

Page

List of Figures

Glossary

Subscripts

- D distillate stream
- d dewformation side
- e evaporation side

Subscripts (continued)

Greek

Abbreviations and Acronyms

1. Executive Summary

Dewvaporation is a specific process of humidification-dehumidification desalination, which uses air as a carrier-gas to evaporate water from saline feeds and form pure condensate at constant atmospheric pressure. The heat needed for evaporation is supplied by the heat released by dew condensation on opposite sides of a heat transfer wall. Since external heat is needed to establish a temperature difference across the wall, and since the temperature of the external heat is versatile, the external heat source can be from waste heat, from solar collectors, or from fuel combustion. The unit is constructed out of thin water wettable plastics and operated at atmospheric pressure.

A 5,000 gallon-per-day (gpd) dewvaporation pilot plant was designed, built, and operated at the 23rd Avenue waste water treatment plant (WWTP) in Phoenix, Arizona. The City of Phoenix Water Services Department, along with the Bureau of Reclamation Phoenix Area Office cooperated to establish a pilot plant site. The pilot plant feed was the concentrate from a Tactical Water Purifier System reverse osmosis (RO) unit with ultrafiltration pretreatment.

A 2000-milligram-per-liter (mg/L) total dissolved solids (TDS) wastewater RO concentrate stream was treated by the pilot plant to more than 45,000 mg/L TDS brine and 10 mg/L TDS distillate. Recovery varied from 70 percent to 100 percent with no decrease in distillate rate or increase in distillate contamination. Thermal multiple effects varied from 2.0 to 3.5, which was less than the 5.0 effects demonstrated prior to transport to the WWTP site. Distillate production rate varied among towers, producing approximately 5 gallons per minute (gpm) per tower, which was less than the target rate of 8.3 gpm. Operating cost was highly dependent on the price of fuel. Using the average of the three best thermal multiple effect values of 3.2, and natural gas cost of \$0.80 per therm, the operating cost of water would be \$20.85 per 1,000 gallons. The use of waste heat or solar thermal would reduce the operating cost to the cost of water pumping and air blowing. Power needs of 0.5 kilowatthours (kWh) per 1,000 gallons at \$0.10 per kWh would amount to \$0.05 per 1,000 gallons.

2. Background and Introduction

Many technologies have been used to perform desalination, resulting in preferred technologies based on economics (Fosselgard and Wangnick [1]). For example, in the desalination of mild brackish (less than $1,000$ milligrams per liter (mg/L) TDS) water, reverse osmosis (RO) is superior to all desalination technologies. This is mainly a reflection of the fact that other technologies involve phase change (boiling), whereas RO employs low-pressure pumps (less than 100 pounds per square inch (lb/in^2) (7 bar)) to move water through semipermeable membranes, resulting in less energy consumption than that involved in a boiling process. One area where RO is ineffective in water purification is in the treatment of waters containing nonfilterable suspended particulates. For example, the Colorado River contains silt in the 1-micron range, which tends to foul RO membranes, increasing the maintenance and/or pretreatment costs of RO operation.

For the more TDS intense aqueous applications such as RO concentrates (Mickley [2]), waste streams, and seawater, other mechanical and thermal technologies economically compete with RO, as seen by Larson et al. [3], [4]. In the case of seawater desalination, the RO pump pressure increases to 1,200 lb/in² (80 bar) and feed waters require extensive pretreatment in order to protect and extend the life of the membranes.

The competitive technologies to RO for seawater desalination include mechanical vapor compression (MVC), multi-stage flash distillation, and multi-effect distillation with and without thermal vapor compression. The MVC needs shaft power to drive its compressor. The motor can be either electrically or thermally driven. For electrically driven MVC, MVC plants consume more electricity than RO units in the same seawater service. The other processes dominantly use and reuse heat as the main driver to affect temperature-driving force between boiling and condensing at staged pressures. The thermally driven plants attempt to reuse the high temperature applied heat as many times as is economically possible to minimize operating costs. This energy reuse factor economically varies from 6 to 12.

2.1 Dewvaporation Philosophy

Thermal processes that operate below the boiling point of water are called humidification/dehumidification (HDH). Younis et al. [5] investigated HDH units using solar energy as the external heat source. Just like the steam-driven external heat operation of an HDH, two heat transfer towers (or zones) are required to transfer heat from a massive flow of water. The water is used as both an internal heat source and internal heat sink. The requirement of two towers makes the HDH process energy inefficient. The dewvaporation technique belongs to the HDH family of technology but requires only one tower making it more energy efficient.

The Arizona State University (ASU) patented technology (Beckman [6]), dewvaporation, is applicable to desalination and reclamation of seawater, brackish water, evaporation pond water, RO plant concentrates, chemical mechanical planarization slurries from the semiconductor industries, volatile organic (methyl tertiary butyl ether, trichloroethylene) contaminant removal from ground, and other impaired sources. Dewvaporation's most economic niche is in small plant applications. Larger plants will evolve in time.

The standard dewvaporation continuous contacting tower is a relatively new, nontraditional, and innovative heat driven process using air as a carrier-gas and remaining at atmospheric pressure throughout the device. The external heat source can be from low temperature solar (131 °F [55 °C]), waste heat, or combustible fuels (210.2 \degree F [99 \degree C]). Briefly, the process works for brackish desalination, as viewed in figure 1 (Beckman [7]; Beckman, Hamieh, and Ybarra [8]; and Hamieh, Beckman, and Ybarra [9]).

Figure 1. Dewvaporation tower design.

A carrier-gas, such as air, is brought into the bottom of the tower on the evaporation side of a heat transfer wall at a typical wet bulb temperature of 69.8 ˚F $(21 \degree C)$, thereby containing about 0.025 moles of water vapor per mole of air. The wall is wetted by saline feed water, which is fed into the evaporation side at the top of the tower. As the air moves from the bottom to the top of the tower, heat is transferred into the evaporation side through the heat transfer wall, which allows the air to rise in temperature and evaporate water from the wetting saline liquid, which coats the heat transfer

wall. Concentrated liquid leaves from the bottoms of the towers, and hot saturated air leaves the tower from the top at 189.5 \degree F (87.4 \degree C) with a humidity of 1.71 moles of water vapor per mole of air. Heat is added to this hot air by an

external heat source (steam was used in this investigation), increasing the air humidity and temperature to a vapor loading of 1.81 and 190.2 °F (87.9 °C), respectively. This hotter saturated air is sent back into the top of the tower on the dew formation side. The dew formation side of the tower, being slightly hotter than the evaporation side, allows the air to cool as condensation heat is transferred from the dew formation side to the evaporation side. Finally, pure water condensate and saturated air leave the dew formation side of the tower at the bottom at 119.7 \hat{F} (48.7 \hat{C}). Total external heat needed is made up of the heat added at the top of the tower to establish a heat transfer temperature difference and the heat needed to establish a temperature offset between the saline feed stock and the pure water condensate used to produce steam. The detrimental effect of salt concentration on the energy reuse factor (or gain output ratio), f, is explained in the theory section.

Figure 2a illustrates that volatile organic carbon removal behaves ideally as the distillation of almost pure, brackish, or sea water. The reclamation of evaporation pond waters that are saturated with salts (20 percent by weight), as shown in figure 2b, is more difficult. The feed waters are processed to extinction by the recycle of bottoms brine back to the feed. The two products are distillate and wet salt solids.

Due to the slight desiccant effect of salts, the energy reuse factor decreases with increased salt concentrations. This suppressed vapor pressure of water reduces the relative humidity of saturated air, causing the addition of more steam to make up the air dryness.

Figure 2. Volatile organic carbon removal and evaporation pond reclamation with dewvaporation.

2.2 Dewvaporation Model

From figures 1 and 2, the mathematical definition of the energy reuse factor, f, is the ratio of the energy transferred through the heat transfer wall to the high temperature energy input, as shown in equation 1 (Beckman [7], [10]):

$$
f = \frac{V_{\text{dh}} - V_{\text{d0}}}{V_{\text{dh}} - V_{\text{eh}}}
$$
 (1)

The definition of the molar production flux, Pf , is the gas traffic (mol of air per second) times the water vapor decrease on the dew formation side of the wall divided by the wall area, as shown in equation 2:

$$
P_f = \frac{G}{A} \cdot (V_{dh} - V_{d0})
$$
 (2)

Typically, the feed/condensate temperature offset is kept to 10 \degree F (5.6 \degree C). This can be accomplished by either an internal or external feed heat exchanger. In this analysis, the energy reuse factor, f, was 16.8. By including the heat needed for the temperature offset, the factor reduces to about 13. Actually, the product of the factor and the molar production flux, Pf , is a constant at parametric Veh. The value of the constant is a function of the operating variables, as shown in the following equations.

The amount of water vapor contained in the air carrier-gas is calculated by specifying the temperature, T, and calculating the vapor pressure, Pw, from equation 3 (Smith and Van Ness [11]):

$$
\ln P_w = B - \frac{\lambda_0}{R \cdot T} \tag{3}
$$

where B and λ 0 are constants obtained by fitting a straight line to the ln(Pw) versus 1/T for the steam table. For temperature range of $32 - 212$ °F (0 – 100 °C), B is 14 and λ0/R is 5209 °K (Perry, Green, and Maloney [12]). The carrier-gas vapor content (moles of water vapor per mole of air) is:

$$
V = \frac{RH \cdot P_w}{P - RH \cdot P_w}
$$
 (4)

where the relative humidity (RH) is given as a function of salinity, S grams salt/liter, by the following equation (Spiegler and Laird [13]):

$$
RH = 1 - 0.000538 \cdot S \tag{5}
$$

The hottest temperature in the evaporating section is specified, allowing the calculation of the largest value of the Veh in the evaporating section of the unit. Then the change in vapor content of the carrier-gas is specified across the top of the tower by:

$$
\Delta V = V_{\text{dh}} - V_{\text{eh}}
$$

From these specifications, the temperature difference across the heat transfer wall at any position can be described as:

$$
\frac{1}{\Delta T_{LM}|_z} = \left[\frac{B^2 \cdot R}{\lambda_0}\right] \cdot \left[\frac{\left(1 + \Delta V + V_e\big|_z\right) \cdot V_e\big|_z}{\Delta V}\right] \tag{7}
$$

In this process, both the film heat and mass transfer coefficients are important in establishing the overall effective heat transfer coefficient, U. For simultaneous heat and mass transfer operations involving air and water, the Lewis Number is essentially unity (McCabe, Smith, and Harriott [14]), allowing the coefficients to be related by similitude as $ky = hg/cp$. The effect of the latent energy associated with the mass transfer of water vapor can be related to the sensible heat transfer associated with the air/vapor mixture by equation 9 after Werling [15].

$$
h_f\big|_z = h_g\big|_z \cdot (1 + M\big|_z)
$$
 (8)

where M is expressed as:

$$
M = \left(\frac{\lambda_0}{RT}\right)^2 \cdot \left(\frac{R}{c_p}\right) \cdot V \tag{9}
$$

Taking into account both gas film heat transfer coefficients and the thermal resistance of the heat transfer wall, then the overall effective heat transfer coefficient, U, can be expressed as:

$$
\frac{1}{|U|_{z}} = \frac{1}{h_{fe}|_{z}} + \frac{1}{h_{fd}|_{z}} + \frac{t}{k}
$$
 (10)

The heat transferred through the heat transfer wall is essentially the latent heat, at the system temperature needed to evaporate water as:

$$
q\big|_{z} = G \cdot \lambda \cdot \left(V_e\big|_{z+\Delta z} - V_e\big|_{z}\right) \tag{11}
$$

The area needed for the heat transfer wall is obtained by an energy balance (Bird, Stewart, and Lightfoot [16]).

(6)

$$
\frac{A\big|_z}{q\big|_z} = \frac{1}{U\big|_z} \times \frac{1}{\Delta T_{LM}\big|_z}
$$
(12)

Where:

$$
\Delta T_{LM} = T_{yd} - T_{ye} \tag{13}
$$

Upon integrating with respect to the overall area and assuming that t/k is small compared to the gas phase resistance, equation 14 then relates the total energy reuse factor, f, and the total production flux, Pf , as follows:

$$
f \cdot P_f = \left\{ \left[\frac{\lambda_0}{B \cdot R \cdot T} \right]^2 \cdot \left[\frac{h_g}{C_p} \right] \right\} \cdot \left(\frac{V_{eh}}{2 + V_{eh}} \right) \cdot \left(\frac{\lambda_0}{\lambda} \right) (18) \cdot F_{RH} \tag{14}
$$

Where the detrimental effect, FRH, of reduced relative humidity at the tower top exiting evaporation air stream, RH, is:

$$
F_{\rm RH} = 1 - (1 - RH) \cdot (1 + f) \cdot (1 + V_{\rm eh}) \tag{15}
$$

Equation 14 shows that as the temperature increases, the product of energy reuse factor and molar production flux become greater. It is also apparent that the energy reuse factor, f, and the molar production flux, Pf, are related hyperbolically in an established unit. The detrimental effect of salt concentration is also included in this expression from equation 15.

Additionally, higher values of V_{eh} ; i.e., higher temperatures, improve both f and Pf values, which is economically beneficial to the tower. However, higher temperatures are limited to the heat source temperature and the normal boiling point of water.

On the other hand, by taking into account the heat conduction resistance in the plastic heat transfer wall and the resistances due to the two liquid films on the wall, then:

$$
P_f \cdot f = \left(\frac{\lambda_0}{B \cdot R \cdot T}\right)^2 \cdot \left(\frac{h_g}{c_p}\right) \cdot \left(\frac{V_{eh}}{2 + V_{eh}}\right) \cdot \left(\frac{\lambda_0}{\lambda}\right) 18 \cdot F \tag{16}
$$

With:

$$
F = \frac{1}{1 + F_{RH} + F_{\varepsilon} + F_{RH} \cdot F_{\varepsilon} \cdot \left(\frac{6 + 3 \cdot V_{eh}}{3 + 2 \cdot V_{eh}}\right)}
$$
(17)

The resulting equation is 18. This expression resembles equation 14, but with an additional term F containing all of the plastic and liquid films resistances to heat transfer. Rearranging these equations into a form that would be linear in a data plot gives:

$$
\frac{\begin{pmatrix} \lambda_0 \\ \lambda \end{pmatrix}}{(3+2\cdot V_{eh})P_{f} \cdot f} = \left[\left(\frac{c_p}{h_g} \right) \right] \cdot \left(\frac{2+V_{eh}}{3\cdot V_{eh} + 2\cdot V_{eh}^2} \right) + \frac{B^2 \cdot R}{6} \cdot \sum \frac{t}{k}
$$
(18)

Air Boundary Layer Wall and Liquids

Essentially, the manner in which equation 18 (Hamieh [17]) is used to determine the effective heat transfer area from the data obtained per run. All of the parameters on the right hand side of equation 18 are known. Data from each run contain the temperature at the top of the tower, production rate, and energy consumed. From the tower top temperature, the water vapor to air ratio and energy reuse ratio can be calculated. Therefore, the production density can be assessed on the left hand side of equation 18. Since the production rate is data, then the effective heat transfer area in the tower can be identified. The effective area is a property of the tower mechanical design, as summarized by Hamieh and Beckman [18], [19].

2.3 Tower Details

The plastic heat transfer wall that best offered low-cost economics, dimensional stability, free flow zones, manufacturability, and availability was twin-wall extrusions found in Spring 2001. The twin-wall extruded plastics are available in many sizes (thickness) ranging from 2 millimeters (mm) to 10 mm. Coroplast, Incorporated's (1-800-666-2241) twin-wall, 4-mm, polypropylene extruded sheet was purchased at \$5.25 per 4-foot by 8-foot sheet from local suppliers. This price is for small quantity from a distributor. Projected price for bulk quantity direct from manufacturer is less than \$2.50 per sheet. Since both sides of the sheet can be used for heat transfer, the price for the heat transfer wall is \$0.039 per square foot. Figure 3 shows an edge-on view of the twin-wall extruded plastic sheet.

The outer surfaces were covered with wetting gauze so that the surfaces would wet with saline feed water. The inner cavity allowed condensation to occur isolated from the saline water. These extruded sheets were cut to size (19 inches wide, 6 feet high) and mounted vertically, as shown in figure 4.

The inner top of the tower is pictured in figure 5. There is a certain level of complexity as shown. Air blows up the saline wet faces of the heat transfer walls and enters the top zone through the sponges, which have holes. The sponges are wetted with saline feed from the feed spouts along the center of the picture.

Figure 3. Edge view of 4-millimeter, twin-wall polypropylene sheet.

Figure 4. Tower sections fitted with gauze.

Figure 5. Top view of the tower.

Steam is shot into the air along the center by a steam pipe (not shown). Air with the added steam moves to the far right and left of the picture, where the air re-enters the heat exchange section and flows back down the tower as it cools and condenses dew. Figure 6 shows completed towers at the manufacturing facility.

Figure 6. Towers at the manufacturing site.

2.4 Pilot Plant Construction

The pilot plant was located at the waste water treatment plant (WWTP). Figure 7 shows a picture of the site, selected out of the various site locations available. This site was chosen for its morning shade, sealed ground, proximity to an office area with machine shop capability, and ease of access. There was space for a maximum of 32 towers.

Figure 7. Towers installed at pilot site with generator, tanks, and tactical water purification system.

An electrical steam generator was located onsite, along with the tactical water purification system (TWPS) used to concentrate the tertiary wastewater for the DewVaporation system feed. The first set of towers, along with the steam generator, is shown in figure 8. The steam generator is in the lower left with some of the first towers. Figure 9 shows some of the tanks, the steam generator enclosure, and first tower set.

 In the summer of 2005, a storm swept through the Phoenix area, uprooting trees and collapsing the first set of towers. The towers were not salvageable. A second set of 25 towers was purchased by the Phoenix Area Office (PXAO) from the manufacturer.

Figure 8. First tower set with steam generator and tanks.

The towers were connected for liquid flow in many arrangements. The arrangement finally selected for data gathering in the fourth year is depicted in figure 9. Figure 9 shows that the pilot plant was subdivided into three units of eight towers. The final brine streams from all 3 subunits flowed to tower 25. The flow connections were designed to allow gradual increase in brine salinity in the sequential chain setup.

Figure 9. Arrangement of towers for the pilot test.

2.5 Pilot Plant Objectives

2.5.1 Initially Proposed Pilot Plant Approach

The pilot plant was to be composed of ten 1,000-gallon-per-day (gpd) modules. Each module is designed to measure 4 feet by 4 feet by 7 feet and was optimized for manufacturing ease. This modulation is required so as to improve transportability of the skid-mounted modules to the WWTP. Some modules will be connected in a parallel arrangement, and others will be connected in series, to best minimize concentrate recycle tower bottoms to the tower top section. Recycling in this manner increases the salinity of the tower feed, which is detrimental to the energy efficiency but necessary in maintaining a wet heat transfer wall for distillate formation. The modules will be separated and dispersed to other demonstration sites when the pilot study is complete.

The pilot plant towers were designed, built, transported to WWTP, installed, and brought online during the first year. In the second year, there were four major test cases operated for approximately 3 months each:

- 1. 5,000 mg/L of feed to make 200,000 mg/L of 200-gpd concentrated brine
- 2. 5,000 mg/L of feed to make 420 lb/day of wet salt solids.
- 3. 1,500 mg/L of feed to make 200,000 mg/L of 60-gpd concentrated brine.
- 4. 1,500 mg/L of saline feed to make 125 lb/day wet salt solids.

The runs were made in this order to take advantage of the TWPS RO concentrator being used to produce 5,000 mg/L of saline water from the 1,500 mg/L of WWTP effluent. The TWPS will be leased for 2 to 3 years starting May 2003.

A liquid feed to the pilot plant will be pumped through a rotometer at 7 gallons per minute (gpm) controlled by a globe valve. This feed will be split into two 3.5-gpm streams and balanced by valves. The tower pumps are surge pumps that are activated by a liquid level control switch. The level of each tower basin brine pool is controlled by overflow to the succeeding tower's surge pump. The surge pump dedicated to the tower is responsible for sending feed water through the tower internal feed heat exchangers to the tower top; therefore, there is one pump per tower. Since flow rates surge, the bucket and stopwatch approach will be used to monitor liquid rates.

Air will be sent to each tower from one blower. Individual air rates will be set by ball valve adjustment and measured by a velocity gas meter at each tower exhaust. Steam will be delivered to each tower by 10 dedicated water boilers. The steam rate will be set to maximum, and each tower air flow rate will be adjusted to give the desired top temperature.

Temperatures of all liquid and air streams (both wet and dry bulb) will be monitored by thermocouples, displayed, and recorded by real time data acquisition.

2.5.2 Pilot Plant Goals and Objectives

The overall plan for this 10,000-gpd pilot study is to move a new and exciting technology out of the ASU laboratories once again and into the field of the real world. A sizable 10,000-gpd unit is presented that will be professionally designed and fabricated, versatile in its feed water salinity demonstrations, and versatile in its product delivery (10,000 mg/L, 300,000 mg/L, and salt solids). The demonstration will be at the WWTP of the City of Phoenix for about 1-year's duration after 1 year needed for fabrication. A trailer-mounted RO unit will be made available from Reclamation for use in this test. The dewvaporation equipment will be versatile in that WWTP effluent and RO effluent will be treated as feed to the dewvaporation process. The dewvaporation unit needs a fuel such as natural gas (\$0.40 per therm), which could be valued as locally available digester gas at no cost. In order to get the site ready, it will be necessary, in time, to assess the electrical power needs/ availability, space allocation, exact site location, and control room needs.

When finished, the portable unit can be transported to other sites for follow-on demonstrations. It would be also possible, due to its modular construction, to send up to ten 1,000-gpd units, or some combination of numbers of modules, to various smaller industrial sites for demonstration. Examples include Cave Creek Desalination Facility and Scottsdale Water Campus.

The objectives that need to be addressed for the successful completion of the first year project include:

- 1. Design 10,000-gpd pilot plant main unit (ten 1,000-gpd towers).
- 2. Professionally manufacture main unit.
- 3. Transport towers sequentially when produced to WWTP.
- 4. Install/test towers at WWTP.
- 5. Write quarterly and final reports for year 1.

In the second year, the pilot plant will:

- 1. Operate unit with RO effluent to produce concentrated brine.
- 2. Operate unit with RO effluent to produce crystals.
- 3. Operate unit with WWTP effluent to produce concentrated brine.
- 4. Operate unit with WWTP effluent to produce crystals.
- 5. Design, build, and demonstrate advanced tower designs based on initial operational results.
- 6. Write quarterly and final reports for the total project.

The minimum of 2 years of study at the 10,000-gpd capacity should prove the reliability of the operation, as there are few moving parts, operating costs are low compared to all equivalent technologies that concentrate brine, and brackish discharges are minimized to the extent that waste disposal costs and/or needed land for evaporation ponds can be reduced by an order of magnitude. Successful accomplishment of Objectives 1 through 5 of year 1, and Objectives 1 through 6 of year 2, will act as a foundation to the practical details needed for the commercial design of that and larger systems. The accomplishment of second year Objective 2 will expand the role of the dewvaporation plants to being crystallizers by the reduced feed flow rate, so that the last tower in series produces crystals instead of brine. All together, the new system will act to replace the standard evaporator (concentrators) and crystallizer process pairing used by electric power generating stations throughout the American West. The newly formed company, L'Eau LLC, has plans and potential funding groups that are focused on rapidly accelerating toward commercialization. These achievements will hasten the commercialization process.

2.6 Pilot Plant Operational Risks

Based on all of the redundant research and development and all of the paths taken, the remaining risks to a successful operation have been minimized. The dewvaporation system has minimal moving parts such as a boiler, pump, and fan. These items are very identifiable and separate, so any malfunctions can be readily detected and corrected. The one unproven step is the operational problems that might be associated with the professionally designed and fabricated towers. This new era in tower construction away from the ASU laboratories is not foolproof. Problems such as liquid leaks both interior and exterior, gas flow bypass, and liquid feed seal breakage have all been previous problems that were corrected in

the smaller units. It is assumed that early detection of these and other problems can be corrected in towers constructed in the future.

2.7 Projected Dewvaporation Economics

The basic economics have not changed much since the first projections in 1999 [6]. Then, the capital cost was about \$ 8,000 per 1,000 gpd for small plants, reducing to \$1,000 per 1,000 gpd for large facilities. Operating costs of water reclamation from seawater and saline solutions varied from \$3.50 per 1,000 gallons to \$0.50 per 1,000 gallons, based on natural gas as a fuel or free waste heat, respectively.

The WWTP will also investigate taking the fed brine to total extinction (crystallization). That is, there will only be wet solids left for disposal and no brine discharge. The capital and operating cost for dewvaporation acting as a crystallizer should not change. The operating cost of an industrial crystallizer (IC) would be an additional \$2 per 1,000 gallons of initial feed stock. The total water cost would then be \$14 per 1,000 gallons. Capital cost for large crystallizers is an additional \$5,600 per 1,000gpd of initial feed stock [18]. The total capital cost for a conventional evaporator with crystallizer would be \$31,600 per 1,000 gpd. Dewvaporation capital cost would remain at \$8,000 per 1,000 gpd.

2.8 Project Management

The project is based on the cooperation of three different entities: The City of Phoenix Water Services Department, PXAO, and L'Eau LLC. These three entities will be managed by their own personnel.

The City of Phoenix hosted the site and provided concrete slabs, utilities, and personnel to operate a 1,500-gallon-per-hour TWPS needed for enhanced salinity levels as feed to a 10,000-gpd dewvaporation pilot plant.

The Bureau of Reclamation - Denver Office borrowed the TWPS from the U.S. Naval Facilities Engineering Service Center in Pt. Hueneme, California. The system was operated by the PXAO. The PXAO Program Management Division Chief is Robert Michaels. Tom Poulson acted as the main contact and field director for the project.

L'Eau LLC was managed full time by Dr. Scott Stornetta as Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer. Dr. Beckman, part time, was Chief Technical Officer to L'Eau LLC and manager of the pilot plant project. The L'Eau LLC

constructed, transported, installed, and operated the 10,000-gpd dewvaporation pilot plant. The engineering staff of L'Eau LLC was present daily to ensure progress in L'Eau's obligations.

2.9 Facilities and Equipment

The WWTP in Phoenix is a 63-million-gallon-per-day facility. The water campus is equipped with chemical testing laboratories capable of total water analysis. Digester gas and natural gas for steam generation needs are available to the pilot plant operation. There is office space adjacent to the concrete pad area. Base level electricity of 1 kilowatt is in place for the pumps, blowers, and display requirements. Natural gas required is 100 therms per day.

2.10 Environmental Impact

The environmental impact for this dewvaporation pilot plant is positive. The pilot plant will treat 1,500 mg/L and 5,000 mg/L of TDS discharge waters to less than 10 mg/L TDS distillate and concentrated brine at 200,000 mg/L TDS of wet crystal solids. The distillate produced can be used to dilute the normal WWTP 1,500-mg/L TDS discharge. A zero environmental impact would be a blending of the distillate and brine to form a 1,500-mg/L TDS WWTP discharge; however, all of the involved entities feel that a more positive application can be found for the distillate of the dewvaporation and the permeate from the RO unit.

2.11 Dismantling the Pilot Plant

Due to the modular construction of the 10,000-gpd pilot plant, the pilot plant could be broken into ten 1,000-gpd units for distribution to 10 sites. The towers are set up in this initial pilot plant to be independent, with dedicated boilers and blowers for individual analysis. This allows the singular distribution possibility. However, combinations of units composed of clusters of the 1,000-gpd units could also be considered. There is need for RO concentrate treatment systems in the Phoenix area (Cave Creek and Scottsdale water campus and other municipal waste water treatment plants or industrial sites).

2.12 Dewvaporation Project Relevance to Desalination and Water Purification Research Objectives

The Desalination Act of 1996 has as its principal focus the development of economical methods to reclaim impaired and saline inland waters. This research

proposal is based on two Reclamation awards under this act, which established the dewvaporation process as a highly efficient economical means for water reclamation. Results from those two awards have led to the final lab design of the dewvaporation process. The technique has the potential to reclaim saline and impaired waters with minimal volume concentrate or even solids.

The **Reclamation Program Objectives** are well satisfied in this proposal:

Reclamation Objective 1: "Increase the ability of communities of varying sizes and financial resources to economically treat saline water to potable standards." The dewvaporation units have successfully operated at the 50-gpd size and will operate at 10,000-gpd size with this proposal. The units operate economically: their manufacturing costs are about \$1,000 gpd, and fuel costs range from \$2.94 to \$0.42 per 1,000 gallons.

Reclamation Objective 2: "Increase the ability of the United States desalting industry to compete throughout the world by fostering partnerships with them for the development of new and innovative technologies."

Reclamation Objective 3: "Develop methods to make desalting more efficient through promotion of dual-use facilities in which waste energy could be applied to desalting water." The dewvaporation process uses low-grade heat and waste heat.

Reclamation Objective 4: "Develop methods to ensure desalting technologies are environmentally friendly." The dewvaporation process is a very low energy user in its standard operation. Also, no new electric generating stations need to be built because the electrical usage is low, at less than 1.6 kilowatthours (kWh) per 1,000 gallons (67 kilowatts for a \$1-milliongpd plant).

All of these objectives, along with third world benefit, were summarized by ASU Research Magazine [20].

3. Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations

From this investigation into the dewvaporation process, it can be concluded that:

- High recovery values of 100 percent were achieved.
- High distillate purity of 10 mg/L of TDS was achieved with 10,000 mg/L of TDS concentrated waste water feed and 45,000 mg/L TDS brines.
- Distillate quality and production rate did not reduce with increased feed salinity.
- Thermal multiple effects ranging from 2.0 to 3.5 were demonstrated, which were less than the value of 5.0 prior to transportation. The product of distillate rate and multiple effect was 1/13 of the theoretical value, revealing high potential for improved performance with continued research and development.
- Demonstrated amortized capital cost was \$3.50 per 1,000 gallons of distillate based on tower purchase from L'Eau and borrowed funds at 8 percent with equipment life of 20 years.
- Demonstrated operating cost ranged from \$0.10 per 1,000 gallons to \$24 per 1,000 gallons, depending on the price of fuel for steam generation. Currently, natural gas value is \$0.80 per therm.
- The target of 5,000 gpd was not achieved due to limitations of the steam boiler capacity and tower efficiency.

It is recommended that:

- Tower air connections be modified to accommodate the "tandem" arrangement to increase multiple effects from 2.0 to 3.5 to 7.0.
- Tower construction design should be changed from the NAS-T to the $NEWT¹$ Demonstrated philosophy to improve tower multiple effect to 5.0.

 $\begin{array}{c}\n\hline\n\end{array}$ ¹ The acronym NAS-T describes a unit with air flowing up or **N**orth on the evaporation side **A**nd then flowing **S**outh or down on the dew formation side of the **T**ower. The acronym NEWT stands for a tower where the air flow pattern is first **N**orth on the evaporation side and then **E**ast and **W**est or zigzag on the downward flow path on the dew formation side of the **T**ower.

- Solar hot water thermal source should be developed for reduced water costs.
- The liquid desiccant heat pumping feature be developed for reduced water costs.

3.1 Pilot Plant Results

Table 1 is a summary of the pilot plant data generated in year 4 of the project. The data sheets that support table 1 are presented in appendix A.

Table 1. Pilot Plant Design Data

More detail of operations is presented in Section 4.6. In summary, table 1 shows that all of the towers could not be operated at the same time due to limitations of the steam generator. Most of the runs operated either subunit A or B, but most of the data was obtained from subunit A. The "Equivalent Pilot Plant Distillate Rate" was projected by ratioing the number of towers in the total plant to the towers in the subunit. Table 1 shows that the highest distillate rate was about 4,500 gpd. The highest thermal multiple effect was 3.3. The recovery (distillate to feed ratio) varied from 34 percent to 100 percent.

The April 2, 2007 operation recycled the pilot plant brine stream back to the feed tank, thereby increasing the salinity from 200 mg/L of TDS to 8,000 mg/L of TDS as the tank emptied. Maximum tower basin saline concentration was found to be 45,000 mg/L of TDS.

3.2 Improvement Recommendations

3.2.1 Tandem Arrangement

In the tandem arrangement shown in figure 10a, a carrier-gas, such as air, is brought into the bottom of the tower on the evaporation side of a heat transfer wall at a typical wet bulb temperature of 70 \degree F (21 \degree C), thereby containing about 0.025 moles of water vapor per mole of air. The wall is wetted by saline feed water, which is fed into the evaporation side. As the air moves from the bottom to the top of the tower, heat is transferred into the evaporation side through the heat transfer wall, allowing the air to rise in temperature and evaporate water from the wetting saline liquid, which coats the heat transfer wall. Concentrated brine leaves from the bottom of the tower, and hot saturated air leaves the tower from the top at 190 \degree F (87.8 \degree C) with a humidity of 1.71 moles of water vapor per mole of air. Heat is added to this hot air by an external heat source, such as atmosphere steam, increasing the air humidity and temperature to a vapor loading of 1.93 and 192 ˚F (88.9 ˚C), respectively. This hotter saturated air is sent back into the top of the tower on the dew formation side. The dew formation side of the tower, being hotter than the evaporation side, allows the air to cool and transfer condensation heat from the dew formation side to the evaporation side. Finally, pure water condensate and saturated air leave the dew formation side of the tower at the bottom at 120 °F (48.7 °C). Total external heat required is made up of the heat needed at the top to establish a heat transfer temperature difference and the heat needed to establish a temperature offset between the saline feed stock and the pure water condensate.

In the tandem flow pattern, air flow in the tower would be modified as shown in figures 10b and 11. The evaporative air would be routed to the condensing chamber of the subsequent tower. In this manner, each tower could act as a single effect evaporator. Energy into a tower would be used to evaporate and condense water only if the liquids to and from the tower enter and leave at about the same temperature. Since the air is totally recycled between towers, no energy leaves the system by that route.

Figure 10. Single tower standard and modified air design.

3.2.2 NEWT Tower Manufacturing

The acronym NEWT stands for a tower where the air flow pattern is first **N**orth on the evaporation side and then **E**ast and **W**est or zigzag on the downward flow path on the dew formation side of the **T**ower. The acronym NAS-T describes a unit with air flowing

up or **N**orth on the evaporation side **A**nd then flowing **S**outh or down on the dew formation side of the **T**ower.

The easiest and least expensive towers that can be built are NAS-T towers. NAS-T were built in Mexico and supplied as the second set of towers to the WWTP in year 3 (section 4.5). The main feature that distinguishes these tower designs is the dew formation return air turnarounds. Without turnarounds, 20 or 30 labor hours are saved. There is also a higher possibility of distillate contamination with turnarounds. Theoretically, the NEWTs should be more energy efficient but somewhat more expensive. Figure 12 shows the NEWT turnarounds.

Figure 11. Proposed tandem air flow arrangement.

Figure 12. NEWT air turnarounds.

3.2.3 Solar Hot Water

Solar collectors can be used in place of steam to generate water at about 170ºF. The hot water can contact the tower top air, thereby evaporating water into the top so as to eliminate the need for additional steam. The cost of a single glaze solar collector is about \$10 per square foot. Assuming an 8-hour solar day and 150 British thermal units (BTU) of collection, then 2,100 square feet of collector would be required to produce 1,000-gpd distillate at a thermal

multiple effect factor of 3.3. The amortized water cost would be \$6.36 per 1,000 gallons. This cost is less than the cost of steam from natural gas, which is \$20.85 per 1,000 gallons. A combination of solar heat utilization, along with NEWT tower development, could reduce the water cost to about \$6 per 1,000 gallons, which includes the amortized tower cost. Figure 13 suggests such a solar arrangement.

Figure 13. Solar hot water heating.

3.2.4 Desiccant Heat Pumping

The philosophy for using a liquid desiccant to enhance the energy reuse factor is based on the ability of strong salt solutions to absorb moisture from air, thus drying the air and releasing the heat of vaporization. This heat can be released at higher temperatures than the original temperature of the air that was contacted by the desiccant, and that heat can be reused to do an equal amount of water evaporation into another air stream.

Figure 14. Desiccant heat pumping with boiler.

Figure 15 shows that a slip stream of hot, humid air at the top of the tower is contacted by a strong liquid desiccant stream (stream 2) in the desiccant contact heat exchanger (5). The remaining hot, humid air is further humidified in (5) by evaporation of feed water to vapor by the energy furnished by the desiccant air drying. The now hotter, humid air stream returns to the dewformation chamber, while the dried air goes to the bottom of the evaporation chamber. The desiccant stream, now diluted by the water vapor picked up in (5), returns to the boiler for regeneration. The steam released in the boiler from boiling desiccant liquid is sent to the top of the dew formation chamber to further increase the temperature and humidity of the returning hot, humid air. In this manner, the boiling energy is essentially halved.

The energy needs should be reduced to half by this technique, compared to the standard operation of the dewvaporation towers.

If dry air were available, then the desiccant could be regenerated by contacting the wet desiccant with the dry air for water evaporation, as depicted in figure 15.

Figure 15. Desiccant heat pumping with air drying.

In this technique of drying liquid desiccants to the original salt concentrations, dry air becomes more humid as the solution looses water. No energy is required other than a fan motor aided by natural wind. The energy needs are reduced to 2.5 kWh of electricity per 1,000 gallons and heat to 80,000 BTU per 1,000 gallons. Less electricity and heat may result due to the action of wind and release of the desiccant dilution heat of solution.

Areas of the world where seawater exists with nearby desert dry conditions are noted but not limited to the cities listed in table 2 (www.bestplaces.net/html/climateus2).

The dry cities were cited as the most advantageous natural areas for drying of desiccant liquids. In these areas, where water is needed most when the air is driest, the air regeneration technique works the best.

The desiccant regeneration technique also works in environments more humid than desert regions. The tower top treated humid air is not dried out as thoroughly in areas of high humidity, resulting in more water being evaporated to the

environment by the desiccant regeneration. Therefore, humid areas can still utilize this ambient air desiccant drying technique, but not as effectively as a desert region.

If the environment air is very humid, the ambient air regeneration technique can work if a solar collector is used to heat water, that can be stored, to heat humid air to a temperature of about 20-percent relative humidity. For example, Houston, New Orleans, or Miami, with air at 80 ˚F and 80-percent relative humidity, could be heated to 140 °F with 150 °F water to a condition of 20-percent relative humidity. Even cooler but humid regions, such as San Francisco, California, could use the desiccant ambient air regeneration by solar heating air to 125 ˚F with 135 °F hot water. These low water temperatures could be achieved in inexpensive single glazed flat plate solar collectors.

Table 2 shows cities with year-round relative humidity .

Table 2. Desiccant Drying Cities
Rural areas closer to seawater are also candidates for dry air generation, but weather data was not available. Possible areas that could benefit from this desiccant technique in bringing pure water to the American West and Southwest are:

- Desalination of the Sea of Cortez at Yuma, servicing water to Arizona, southern California, and northern Mexico.
- Desalination of Pacific Ocean at San Bernardino, servicing water to Los Angeles basin.
- Desalination of the Salton Sea at Palm Springs.

4. Work Performed

The 2-year pilot plant program extended into a 4-year investigation, with year 1 beginning October 2003 and ending in September 2004. The first year of the pilot plant project focused on site development and tower construction.

The first tower was built by Plastifab, Inc., in Phoenix. The tests confirmed the production rate of one tower could reach 80 pounds per hour (lb/hr) of distillate with a thermal multiple effect of 5, thereby requiring 20 more towers for the 5,000-gpd pilot plant. The L'Eau assembly facility was setting up to produce at least four towers per week beginning in February 2004.

A plastics fabrication company, Plastifab, Inc., was selected as the introductory manufacturer responsible for modifying the ASU tower design for fabrication. Meetings were held with the ASU design team and Larry Wilson of Plastifab, Inc. Plastifab, Inc., was chosen as the initial manufacturer based on its experience with large-sized fabrications similar to our 2-foot by 2-foot by 8-foot quad towers. During the manufacturing meetings, the advanced techniques were discussed and agreed upon by all present. The most significant advance was in the elimination of side wall paring with a tongue-and-groove turnaround side wall. Also, the bottom pan and exterior side walls would be vacuum formed.

Design was achieved by graduate students who met together at ASU research labs, including Dr. Beckman, Victor Banks, Joshua Brown, Andrew Davis, and Robin Roth. These students represented the combined knowledge of a dewvaporation tower design, construction, operation, and analysis team.

The first tower was fabricated and tested at Plastifab, Inc. L'Eau personnel tested the tower for operational performance, and internal and external liquid and gas leaks. Modifications were made to the bottom feed assembly of the professional design to prevent excessive feed leaks into the brine basin. Due to high manufacturing costs, the professional design equipment, along with learned techniques, was moved to L'Eau's new assembly office at 910 S. Hohokam Way, suite 101, Tempe, Arizona. There, the two engineers, Mr. Joshua Brown and Mr. Victor Banks, directed assembly personnel to manufacture towers of lower cost.

4.1 Changing Design Basis from 10,000 gpd to 5,000 gpd

Cost over-runs have also been identified in the tower construction. As L'Eau LLC is a newly formed company, there has been very limited opportunity to purchase assembly equipment to reduce personnel needs. Because of these increased costs (manufacturing and operations), L'Eau LLC and Reclamation mutually agreed that the pilot plant study would proceed at the 5,000-gpd capacity to allow a balanced budget.

The Reclamation/City of Phoenix project has been an invaluable project for the evolution and commercialization of dewvaporation towers. As the towers have been produced, improvements have been devised and engineered that are significantly improving the delivered product. The knowledge gleaned was used to modify the original tower design and enable L'eau to modify the towers built to approach the performance of the current generation towers. The first towers built by L'Eau LLC are presented in table 3.

Tower Identification Number	Twin Wall Size	Width	No. of Face Sheets	Gauze Type	Expected Output (lb/hr)
$2 - 1$	4 mm	22	60	Cotton	60
$2 - 2$	4 mm	22	60	Cotton	60
$2 - 3$	4 mm	22	60	Cotton	60
$2 - 4$	4 mm	22	60	Cotton	60
$3 - 5$	4 mm	33	30	Cotton	100
$3-6$	4 mm	33	30	Undecided	100
$3 - 7$	3 mm	20	60	Cotton	70

Table 3. Initial Towers Built

4.2 Design Modifications

4.2.1 Independent "Unit Cell" Turnarounds

The first commercial units, built in December, incorporated a common "turnaround panel" that was vacuum formed by Plasti-Fab, Inc. The design has merit, but at the current manual labor-intensive phase of manufacturing, the precision necessary could not be achieved. Thus, the first four towers for Reclamation were built with independent "unit cell" turnarounds. Initial performance of these towers (2-1 through 2-4) was 50 lb/hr, prompting further investigation and design adjustments.

4.2.2 Wide 33-Inch Towers

In an effort to build a single unit capable of producing 1,000 gpd, towers 3-5 and 3-6 were built 33 inches wide. Significant labor savings was anticipated using a wider tower, but the increased width gave more room for lateral temperature gradients. Such gradients could reduce tower performance.

4.2.3 Narrow Gauge 3-MM Twin-Wall

Tower 3-7 was built using a thinner twin wall. The tower was about 23 percent smaller and produced 50 lb/hr, just like its 4-mm counterpart. The main concern for this smaller plastic was an increased pressure drop and blower power requirement. The tower pressure was 10 mm of water, well within reasonable blower capacities.

4.2.4 Parallel Pathways

One tower, built in March, was divided into two smaller towers. Each of these towers produced 45 lb/hr, suggesting that a tower is capable of 90 lb/hr. Currently, efforts are being focused on duplicating this higher performance in existing towers.

4.3 Manufacturing Capacity

Table 4 lists the towers delivered to the Phoenix WWTP and their characteristics. The manufacturing capacity of the Hohokam site nearly doubled during the first quarter. During the month of February, four towers were built, with a total of 1,000-gpd projected capacity. During the month of March, five towers and one 33-inch-wide tower were completed, with another 3- inch-wide tower 50 percent complete. Those towers represent 2,000-gpd capacity. During both months, four laborers were employed and directed by the two L'eau engineers, Joshua Brown, and Victor Banks.

Tower No.	Tower ID	Twinwall Size	Width	No. of Face Sheets	Gauze Type	Pedestal Number	Delivered
1	2-1 NEWT	4 mm	23	60	Cotton	1	Yes
$\overline{2}$	2-2 NEWT	4 mm	23	60	Cotton	1	Yes
3	2-3 NEWT	4 mm	23	60	Cotton	1	Yes
$\overline{4}$	2-4 NEWT	4 mm	23	60	Cotton	1	Yes
5	3-1 NEWT (orica)	4 mm	22	60	Cotton	2	Yes
6	3-2 NEWT (orica)	4 mm	22	60	Plastic	2	Yes
$\overline{7}$	3-3 NEWT (orica)	4 mm	22	60	Cotton	2	Yes

Table 4. Towers Built for Transport to Phoenix

Tower No.	Tower ID	Twinwall Size	Width	No. of Face Sheets	Gauze Type	Pedestal Number	Delivered
8	3-4 NEWT (orica)	4 mm	22	60	Plastic	$\overline{2}$	Yes
$\boldsymbol{9}$	12-1 NEWT (plastifab)	4 mm	22	60	Cotton	6	Yes
10	5-1 NEWT	4 mm	33	60	Cotton	5	Yes
11	6-1 NAS-T	4 mm	22	55	Cotton	5	Yes
12	6-2 NAS-T, W	4 mm	33	30	Plastic	5	Yes
13	6-3 NAS-T, W	4 mm	33	30	Plastic	5	Yes
14	8-1 NAS-T, C	3 mm	22	60	Cotton	3	Yes
15	8-2 NAS-T, C	3 mm	22	60	Cotton	3	Yes
16	8-3 NAS-T, C	$3/4$ mm hybrid	22	30	Cotton	3	Yes
17	8-4 NAS-T, C	$3/4$ mm hybrid	22	30	Cotton	3	Yes
18	8-5 NAS-T, C	$3/4$ mm hybrid	22	30	Cotton	3	Yes
19	8-6 NAS-T, C	$3/4$ mm hybrid	22	30	Cotton	3	Yes
20	9-1 NAS-T, C	4 mm	22	60	Cotton	4	No
21	9-2 NAS-T, C	4 mm	22	60	Cotton	4	No
22	9-3 NAS-T, C	4 mm	22	60	Cotton	4	No
23	9-4 NAS-T, C	4 mm	22	60	Cotton	4	No

Table 4. Towers Built for Transport to Phoenix (continued)

4.3.1 NAS-T Design and Operation

The acronym NEWT stands for a tower where the air flow pattern is first **N**orth on the evaporation side and then **E**ast and **W**est or zigzag on the downward flow path on the dew formation side of the **T**ower. The acronym NAS-T describes a unit with air flowing up or **N**orth on the evaporation side **A**nd then flowing **S**outh or down on the dew formation side of the **T**ower.

The cheapest towers that can be built are NAS-T towers. Without turnarounds, 20 to 30 labor hours are saved. There is also 100-percent distillate containment. Without the turnarounds, there is not any dew surface area that is blocked. Theoretically, the NEWTs should be more robust.

Effect of face sheet width. Without crossflow, wider towers have greater potential for evaporation and dew formation streams to miss each other, but wide towers have more surface area.

Effect of tower height. The only problem with height is handling the towers and approaching the 8-foot liquid feed heat exchanger limit.

Effect of number of heat transfer walls (sheets) per unit. Increasing the number of sheets may create a parallel flow problem.

Towers to be built. To observe these effects, several towers should be built. A 20-inch-wide tower was suggested as the desired width. Therefore, new 80-inch-tall towers (22 inches taller than current towers) should be built with varying sheet count.

Modification of tower design to better meet Reclamation Objective No. 2. The recently designed NAS-T towers were added to by moving the side liquid feed heat exchangers to the center of the tower. This design change should help eliminate any contamination of the distillate. The new design is referred to as the NAST-CF towers.

The L'Eau construction site was moved to Nogales, Mexico, to better take advantage of reduced labor costs of construction. The construction and testing of the towers were completed prior to shipment.

4.3.2 NAS-T-C Tower Design

The notion of moving the liquid feed heat exchangers into the center of the tower sheets came from the observation that small amounts of feed contamination, on the order of 5 mg/L to 10 mg/L TDS, occurred due to manufacturing misalignments. Moving the liquid feed heat exchangers to the center allows any leaks to contaminate the brine instead of the distillate.

4.3.3 Transportation of Towers to WWTP

As the site preparation at the WWTP is almost finalized, it was decided to transport towers to the WWTP site. Currently, the towers onsite comprise 4,000 gpd of the 5,000-gpd capacity. As the onsite towers are positioned onto the pilot plant pedestals, the remaining towers will be transported to the WWTP site and positioned as well.

4.3.4 Install Towers at WWTP

On February 12, 2004, there was a kick-off meeting at the WWTP for the RO-DEWVAP Pilot Plant Project. This meeting brought together project personnel from L'Eau LLC, City of Phoenix, Reclamation, and Valentine Engineering. The purpose of these meetings was to establish a common understanding of the needs of all constituents and a working together pathway for the development of the entire project. The electrical plug boxes for each pedestal represent the terminus of the electrical lines. Project site engineering establishes the foundations for tower installation.

4.4 Year 2 (October 2004 - September 2005)

4.4.1 NAS-TC Tower Design and Operation

The notion of moving the liquid feed heat exchangers into the center of the tower sheets came from the observation that small amounts of feed contamination, on the order of 5 mg/L to 10 mg/L of TDS, occurred due to manufacturing misalignments. Moving the liquid feed heat exchangers to the center allows any leaks to contaminate the brine instead of the distillate. Current operations show a 10,000 times reduction of TDS from feed to distillate.

4.4.2 Pilot Plant Overview

The 21 main towers (white towers with one blue insulated tower and one acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS) black covered tower) are spread out on six pedestals. The storage tanks in the middle of figure 16 are black to prevent algae growth. The tank on the far right is the distillate hold tank for boiler feed. The two center tanks hold RO concentrate for feed to the pilot plant towers. The tank on the far left contains brine from the pilot plant. The canvas covered object in the bottom of the picture is the RO unit that supplies the pilot plant with RO concentrate.

 The RO unit was a 1,500-gallon-per-hour TWPS, which received secondary waste water effluent and produced permeate and concentrate. The concentrate was tested by the dewvaporation pilot plant in subsequent runs. The RO unit is covered in brown tarp in figure 16. In figure 17, a TWPS is shown in transport mode during vibration testing.

Figure 16. Overview picture of the as-built pilot plant.

Figure 17. Tactical water purification system (vibration testing).

4.4.3 Electrosteam Boiler Operational

The electrosteam boiler safety certification caused a 9-month delay in the pilot plant startup. Electrical power requirements necessitated 480 volts to minimize amperage ratings. Since no electrical boilers could be found for outdoor service,

an enclosure was designed, fabricated, and installed as shown in figure 18. After the boiler was safety certified, the engineers explored the operational methods to vary the steam generation rate from a maximum of 850 lb/hr to a minimum of

Figure 18. Electric steam boiler in its enclosure.

130 lb/hr. The steam boiler was custom designed so that its six boiler elements could be separately activated. During normal operation, 5,000-gpd distillate production should require about 350 lb/hr of steam. The boiler steam production range will allow investigation into the shifting of the multiple effect value and the production density. The multiple effect value impacts operating cost, while the production density establishes capital cost.

4.4.4 RO Unit Operational

In June, Mr. Mark Silbernagel trained the L'Eau engineers how to start, operate, and shut down the RO unit. The unit must operate at least 2 days per week for membrane protection. During operation times, RO concentrate will fill the pilot plant feed tanks so that RO concentrate will always be available as feed. The 2,000 gallons of feed storage allows almost 10 hours for the RO unit to come onstream after a pilot plant startup.

4.4.5 New Towers on Site

In June 2005, seven new towers were delivered to the WWTP from L'Eau's manufacturing plant. More towers were planned for transport to the WWTP in July and August for increased pilot plant capacity. The new NAST-S towers represent the standard tower product currently being fabricated for sales. The older towers will be enhanced and somewhat replaced by the newer units.

Figure 19 shows some of the newer towers onsite at the WWTP. These commercial towers are manufactured as identical. This is the first standard product of L'Eau. The assembly is compactly held by an external aluminum

Figure 19. Standardized towers from L'eau.

brace and covered with a layer of black ABS plastic for protection. The ABS was removed from all but one tower to inspect for any possible damage due to transport.

4.5 Year 3 (October 2005 - September 2006)

The dewvaporation pilot plant was hit by a microburst storm in July that knocked down all but two of the towers. The downed towers were tested, and three were operational. The PXAO placed an order for 25 new towers as replacements. The new towers represented the most current professional designs and were delivered to the waste water treatment plant in Phoenix.

The dewvaporation pilot plant construction continued. The tower tiedown system was designed and installed. Valentine Engineering installed the horizontal rail system that allowed all of the towers to be strapped in place to prevent any possible future tower destruction due to high-velocity winds. The new tower layout incorporated surface mounting of the towers, thus eliminating the raised platforms upon which the towers were previously placed. This gave more stability.

In February 2006, the contracted company, L'Eau LLC, ran out of financing and ceased to exist as a workable entity. The ASU license was transferred to ALTELA, Inc., so that production and availability of dewvaporation towers could be continued. ALTELA is located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Press releases disclosed details of the transfer [21], [22].

As the pilot plant construction continued, the PXAO hired Mr. Stephen Poplawski, who was a past employee of L'Eau LLC, to continue the construction of the pilot plant. Twenty-five towers were erected and connected by piping for operations. The steam generator was modified and adjusted for operations. Modifications were made to the water feed pump and solenoid for improved operations. A steam test was set up to determine the steam flow rate to the entire pilot plant. This test will be used periodically throughout the testing period so that the multi-effect factor can be accurately assessed.

Liquid flow accumulators for the feed rate, distillate rate, and brine rate were installed in order to determine the multi-effect factor and to verify a mass balance of liquid flows.

The dewvaporation pilot plant construction concluded. The pilot plant was started up. Initial steam rate was 423 lb/hr. Distillate rate was 760 lb/hr, yielding an energy reuse factor of 1.8. An energy factor this low required an internal inspection of all of the towers to determine if there was damage in transportation or a shifting of the internal structures associated with feed water distribution.

4.6 Year 4 (October 2006 - April 2007)

Significant operation, data collection, and analysis were the major events of the fourth year.

4.6.1 Measurements

There were four measured entities used throughout the investigation: liquid flow rate, tower top temperatures, water TDS, and steam rate.

The liquid flow rates were first measured by a flow totalizer that indicated total water gallons processed. The combined feed rate, distillate rate, and brine rate were traced. The totalizers were becoming fouled with dirt particles, and the technique was abandoned in favor of the "bucket and stopwatch" approach. A 2-quart container was used, requiring from 20-second to 40-second timing. These quantities were accurate enough to monitor the somewhat oscillatory flow behavior inherent in the pilot plant.

The tower top temperatures were monitored with a hand-held thermocouple read out instrument. The thermocouples themselves were tower dedicated and located permanently in top of each tower.

The stream quality, in mg/L of TDS, was probed by a hand-held multiprobe TDS meter. The feed, distillate (individual and composite), and brine outflows were measured.

The steam rate from the electrical steam pressure boiler was adjustable incrementally by setting heater rod toggle switches. The steamer was rated at 850-lb/hr steam production but a maximum steam rate of 420 lb/hr was determined by a commercial-sized bucket and stopwatch technique. A 55-gallon drum was filled with 40 gallons of water at 85 ˚F. Steam flow was timed from 2 minutes to 4 minutes, allowing the water to heat to no more than 135 ˚F. The test procedure was repeated throughout the data gathering period to ensure knowledge of the steam rate that was necessary for thermal multiple effect factor. Quite frequently, the heater elements would burn out, thereby producing less steam than the boiler was set to produce.

4.6.2 General Waste Water Feed Operation

Following the completion of construction, runs were initiated mainly by using waste water secondary effluent as a feed source. During the fall period (August 30, 2006, to February 9, 2007), the thermal efficiency of the towers was improved by various physical changes in the equipment design. Changes such as:

- Air input nozzle location
- Tower top air seals
- Feed pump rate increases and decreases
- Air tower flow rate increase and decreases
- Top sponge compaction
- Tower leveling
- Steam boiler pressure

From table 1, the thermal efficiency changed from an average of 1.7 (August to November 2006) to an average of 2.9 (November to December 2006), with a maximum of 3.3. During the fall 2006 period, all of the runs were constant feed composition (1,000 mg/L TDS) and flow rate until steady state was achieved in 6 to 8 hours.

4.6.3 RO Concentrate Feed Operations

During March and April 2007, the TWPS supplied RO concentrate at 1,900 mg/L of TDS to the pilot plant. In March and April, runs of high recovery were made to demonstrate the dewvaporation tower's ability to process high TDS concentrates with high recoveries. The March 7 run was a steady state operation that produced 4,300-mg/L TDS brine from a 1,500-mg/L TDS RO concentrate feed. The recovery was 78 percent.

From April 2 to April 4, a planned run to achieve 100-percent recovery was made. In order to achieve 100-percent recovery, the brine discharge from the pilot plant was routed back to the feed tank, while the pilot plant distillate was discharged. The feed tank was initially filled with 785 gallons of 1,900-mg/L TDS RO concentrate. With time, the saline concentration in the feed tank increased from 1,900-mg/L TDS to 10,000-mg/L TDS, as the fed tank totally emptied at 100-percent recovery. The feed tank was simulated and matched plant data (figure 20).

Figure 20. Feed tank salinity – semi batch run.

Analysis of the tower basins showed brine salinity levels as high as 45,000-mg/L TDS, thereby accounting for all of the salt initially in the feed tank that was fed to the pilot plant. Figure 21 shows the process flow connections to and from each tower. It was assumed that the effluent salinity from each tower was the same as the salinity in that tower's basin. However, the tower connections were made in such a way that feed to a tower continued to the next

tower in line, and the tower that received the feed used what was necessary for distillate make only. Figure 21 is a schematic of a tower basin, showing two basin compartments. The tower sat in the larger tower basin, while the smaller pump basin hosted a tower feed pump and a brine discharge pump. The brine stream from a previous tower shot directly at the brine discharge pump, thereby allowing most of the brine from a previous tower to bypass the tower. In this manner, the tower simply continued to use some of the liquid for distillate make, allowing the basin brine to continue to increase in salinity throughout the run.

Figure 22 shows the simulated basin salinity concentration buildup for each tower which agreed with the salinity data from each tower basin.

Figure 21. Tower basin design.

Figure 22. Tower salinity – semi batch run.

5. Economics

Based on the pilot plant data, as presented in appendix B, a nominal 20,000-gpd desalination facility was designed and priced for RO waste water concentrate desalination. Fifty-six towers would be required. The towers can be compacted and positioned as shown in figure 23. The tower air exhaust ears could be mounted on a single side, while the air inlets would be mounted on the same face liquid feed ports. In this manner, four towers would be positioned touching their neighbors as shown. The dimension of the block of four towers would be 4 feet by 4 feet. The tower blocks would be positioned 1/2 foot apart and would require an 8-foot-wide walkway as shown. The footprint would be 77 square feet per 1,000 gpd, which is sizeable. The 20,000-gpd plant would cost \$112,000, based on the cost of the 25 towers purchased and located at the WWTP. If money were borrowed at 8 percent with a life of 20 years, then the amortized capital charge for water would be \$3.40 per 1,000 gallons.

The cost of additional energy would increase the total water cost. Using the average multiple effect value of the best three runs of 3.2, then the heat needed for 1,000 gallons of distillate production would be 2.6 million BTUs (764 kWh heat). At a natural gas cost of \$0.80 per therm, then the operating cost would be \$20.85 per 1,000 gallons. If waste heat or solar heat were available, then the operating cost would reduce to the electrical cost of pumps and fans, which was \$0.05 per 1,000 gallons for 0.5 kWh per 1,000 gallons.

Figure 23. 20,000-gpd dewvaporation plant footprint.

Therefore, the total water cost

would be \$24.30 per 1,000 gallons, assuming natural gas as the fuel source. The total minimal water cost would be \$3.45 per 1,000 gallons for waste heat utilization.

Other advantages of a sizeable plant include: single feed pump for feed to each tower, single steam source with steam plenum to each tower, gravity flow of brines, low maintenance, and modular construction allows incremental plant expansion.

6. Reference List

- [1] Fosselgard, G., and K. Wangnick. "Comprehensive Study on Capital and Operational Expenditures for Different Types of Seawater Plants." *Desalination*, 76, 1989.
- [2] Mickley, M. "Membrane Concentrate Disposal: Practices and Regulations," Final Report No. 69, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, September 2001.
- [3] Larson, R. et al. "The Carrier-Gas Process: A New Desalination and Concentration Technology," *Desalination*, 73, p. 119, 1989a.
- [4] Larson, R. et al. *The Carrier-Gas Process: A New Desalination and Concentration Technology.* Proceedings of the Fourth World Congress of Desalination and Water Reuse, Kuwait, November 1989b.
- [5] Younis, M.A., M.A. Darwish, and F. Juwayhel. "Experimental and Theoretical Study of a Humidification-Dehumidification Desalting System," *Desalination*, 84, 1993.
- [6] Beckman, J.R. "Method and Apparatus for Simultaneous Heat and Mass Transfer Utilizing a Carrier-Gas," Patent Pending, Assigned to Arizona State University, No. 60/145,692, July 1999.
- [7] Beckman, J.R. *Innovative Atmospheric Pressure Desalination*, Final Report, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Report No. 52, September 1999.
- [8] Beckman, J.R., B.M. Hamieh, and M.D. Ybarra. "Brackish and Seawater Desalination Using a 20 Square Feet Dewvaporation Tower," *Desalination*, 140 (2001), 217-226.
- [9] Hamieh, B., J.R. Beckman, and M.D. Ybarra. "The Dewvaporation Tower: An Experimental and Theoretical Study with Economic Analysis," *The International Desalination and Water Reuse Quarterly*, 10 (2), 2000.
- [10] Beckman, J.R. *Carrier-Gas Enhanced Atmospheric Pressure Desalination*, Final Report, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Report No. 92, 2002.
- [11] Smith, J.M., and H.C. Van Ness. *Introduction to Chemical Engineering Thermodynamics*, 4th edition, McGraw-Hill, Inc.: San Francisco, 1987.
- [12] Perry, R.H., D.W. Green, and J.O. Maloney. *Perry's Chemical Engineers' Handbook*, McGraw-Hill, Inc.: San Francisco, 1984.
- [13] Spiegler, K.S., and A.D.K. Laird. *Principles of Desalination: Part B*, 2nd edition, Academic Press: New York, 1980.
- [14] McCabe, W.L., J.C. Smith, and P. Harriott. *Unit Operations of Chemical Engineering*, 5th edition, McGraw-Hill, Inc.: San Francisco, 1993.
- [15] Werling, P.H. "Design and Experimental Operation of a Times-Two Liquid Desiccant Regeneration System," MS Thesis, Arizona State University, 1990.
- [16] Bird, R.B., W.E. Stewart, and E.N. Lightfoot. *Transport Phenomena*, John Wiley and Sons, Inc.: New York, 1960.
- [17] Hamieh, B.M. "A Theoretical and Experimental Study of Seawater Desalination Using Dewvaporation," Ph.D. Dissertation, Arizona State University, 2001.
- [18] Hamieh, B.M., and J.R. Beckman. "Seawater Desalination Using Dewvaporation Technique: Theoretical Development and Design Evolution," *Desalination*, 195, 2006.
- [19] Hamieh, B.M., and J.R. Beckman. "Seawater Desalination Using Dewvaporation Technique: Experimental and Enhancement Work with Economic Analysis," *Desalination*, 195, 2006.
- [20] Hall, L.E.. "Simple Solution for Clear Water," *Arizona State University Research Magazine,* winter 2004, pp. 39-41, Web site <http://researchmag.asu.edu>
- [21] Webb, A. (journal staff writer). "Local Tech Gets Exclusive License," Business Section, *Albuquerque Journal*, Albuquerque, New Mexico, April 29, 2006.
- [22] Hairston, D. (contributing editor). "The Desalination Challenge: Making Water Abundantly Available," *Chemical Engineering Progress*, CEP, September 2006, vol. 102, No. 9, pp. 6-8.

Appendix A

Pilot Plant Operational

Appendix B

City of Phoenix Water Analysis

23rd Ave Salinity Samples
D. Allen 05/01/07 **23rd Ave Salinity Samples D. Allen 05/01/07**

٦

ı

Appendix C

Metric Conversions

Metric Conversions

