



GIWA UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2018

Water Reclamation Facility Update

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GIWA is excited to announce that after several years of planning, Phase 1 of a much needed \$15 million rehabilitation of the Island’s water reclamation facility (WRF), located on the Gasparilla Inn Golf Course, is underway. A WRF is a wastewater treatment plant that reclaims or recycles wastewater into water that can be reused for beneficial purposes, including golf course irrigation! The upgraded facility will utilize current state-of-the-art treatment processes and equipment. The reclaimed water from the plant will meet current regulations as well as anticipated future regulations.

To minimize the impact on golfers on the Gasparilla Inn Golf Course, our lease with the Inn allows construction of the new facilities between May 1 and November 15. Work completed while the course is still open will be carefully coordinated with the Inn. With this short construction season, GIWA will complete the project in phases over a three- to four-year period. This will require careful planning to take full advantage of our “construction season” which is set to begin construction May 1 of each year. During the construction “off-season”, contractors and equipment will be procured and organized so we are ready to begin the next phase each year.

Construction this summer includes the installation of a new generator, clearing and earthwork, and relocating underground electric lines and water and sewer piping to free the site for the location of a new tank that will be constructed next summer.

The short construction season is only one challenge for this project. The higher weight limits now allowed on the Boca Grande Causeway bridges makes this project feasible, but we still have a weight limit issue with the golf course bridge. The existing bridge to the golf course will not handle the loads necessary to construct the new facility. Our engineers and Board have determined the most practical way to solve this problem will be to construct a temporary bridge like the one used while building the southernmost Boca Grande Causeway bridge. This temporary bridge will be located just north of the existing golf course bridge. It will not allow boat traffic to pass through this area during the months we are under construction. Boaters will still have the option to use the north channel between Boca Grande Isles and the golf course or the south channel out of Boca Grande Marina. The center span of the bridge will be removed and stored at the end of each construction season, allowing boat traffic to flow unhindered again until construction starts the following May 1.

Phase 2 of the project will be completed in the summer of 2019. The temporary bridge will be (continued Page 2)

The upgraded facility will utilize current state-of-the-art treatment processes and equipment. The reclaimed water from the plant will meet current regulations as well as anticipated future regulations.

Water Reclamation Facility Update (continued)

installed, and a new concrete tank along with associated mechanical equipment will be constructed. To accomplish this over the summer months, precast concrete walls for the tank will be manufactured off island in the construction “off-season”. This will also greatly reduce the concrete truck traffic on the Island’s roads attributed to our project.

Phase 3 is planned for the summer of 2020 and will include rehabilitation of an existing concrete treatment plant which will then be converted to a cutting-edge treatment system, of which we can all be proud.

Rate Increase

At our 2017 Annual Meeting, the membership approved a series of rate increases designed to ensure GIWA could obtain necessary financing for the wastewater treatment plant project and maintain sound financial conditions by meeting existing and future annual debt service and debt financial covenants. These rate increases will also help us maintain adequate funding for operation and maintenance of the water and wastewater systems, including renewals and replacements. Adequate cash reserves will also be insured. The rate increases approved were 9.5% effective April 1, 2017 and October 1, 2017, and up to 9.5% effective October 1 of 2018, 2019 and 2020.

The first two rate increases were put into effect and we have seen the expected positive impact on our financial statements. Your Board of Directors carefully reviewed our financial statements to determine if the full 9.5% rate increase is necessary this year. With rising interest rates and construction costs that will impact the water reclamation facility project, they determined that the full 9.5% increase effective October 1, 2018 is necessary. The Board wants to assure you that our financial statements will be thoroughly analyzed next summer to determine if the full rate increase is required in 2019 or if a lesser amount will be sufficient to keep GIWA in sound financial condition.

Water Treatment Plant Expansion

An expansion to the water treatment facilities including two new deep wells north of the existing facility was completed in December 2017. With this project, the reverse osmosis process was upgraded to a modern design that allows the plant to operate more efficiently and produce an additional 194,000 gallons per day.

Reverse osmosis (RO) is a water treatment process that removes contaminants from water by using pressure to force water molecules through a semi-permeable membrane. During this process, the contaminants are filtered out and flushed away, leaving clean, safe drinking water. GIWA’s RO plant treats brackish water - water that has more salt than freshwater - but not as much as seawater.

Prior to this expansion, during dry periods, GIWA’s water treatment plant could not produce enough water to keep up with demand. To supplement our production, an average of twenty to thirty thousand gallons of water per day was purchased from Charlotte County Utilities. With the upgrades in service, GIWA did not need to purchase any water to supplement our own production this year. Producing as opposed to purchasing is a cost savings because GIWA can produce our own water much more cost effectively than purchasing.

This project was financed with a 1.16% twenty-year loan through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF). The project was originally scheduled for completion in January 2017; however, our chosen contractor went out of business. Completion of the project was taken over by the surety company holding their performance bond. (continued Page 3)

Water Treatment Plant Expansion (continued)

The original contract amount of \$3,742,450 was reduced by almost \$500,000 because contingency funds were not used, some items that were not critical to the project were not completed, and GIWA assessed liquidated damages due to construction delays by the responsible contractor. FDEP has agreed to allow GIWA to use the excess funds to upgrade our older deep wells to the new technology used in the two new deep wells.

Water Usage Update

GIWA's water withdrawal permit issued by Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) in 2011 includes a requirement that we reduce our daily average water use per person from an average of 176 gallons as follows:

Reduce to 164 gallons per person by December 31, 2014

Reduce to 150 gallons per person by December 31, 2019

The following table includes our daily gross water use, population and our compliance per capita use as reported to SWFWMD:

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Gross Water Use	1,112,000	1,098,000	1,108,000	1,108,000
Functional Population	5,953	6,056	6,096	6,091
Compliance Per Capita	158	159	162	160

It may look odd that our gross water use remained the same, and population slightly decreased, but our Compliance Per Capita was reduced two gallons per person. Compliance per capita is a complicated calculation that includes many factors. We use bridge crossing records to calculate a commuter population for people who come to the Island to work or visit for the day. Bridge crossings recorded after Hurricane Irma in 2017 decreased significantly and as a result our calculated population is lower. Our per capita was reduced due to two reasons. We receive a credit for one half of reclaimed water (treated wastewater) used by the Gasparilla Inn for irrigation of the golf course. With drier weather, they used more reclaimed water. GIWA was able to lower the amount of water flushed in the distribution system to maintain water quality.

As you can see, we need to reduce our per capita usage ten gallons per person over the next fifteen months. We must make every effort to reduce our water usage to meet the 2019 mandate. GIWA wants to remind everyone that if landscape sprinklers are turned off when it rains, it will go a long way towards meeting our permit mandate. Many irrigation systems on the Island are not turned off when it rains even during the summer rainy months. The easiest way to accomplish this is to install automatic rain shutoff devices that override irrigation systems when sufficient rain has fallen. Florida law requires a working rain shutoff device for all automatic sprinkler systems. Besides being a requirement, this is simply an effortless way to save not only one of our most precious resources, but also money on your monthly water bill.

Rapid Emergency Notifications

GIWA can quickly notify you of an emergency, such as a precautionary boil water notice, via telephone calls, texts and/or e-mail messages using an emergency communication network provided by CodeRed. We are utilizing the Lee County emergency database of Boca Grande telephone numbers for emergency notices. However, notifications would be more effective if we also have additional contact information such as cell phone numbers or email addresses. GIWA encourages our members to visit mygiwa.com and follow the link to "CodeRed" under the "Customer Service" tab to add additional contact information for your address. If you do not have access to a computer, please contact us at 941-964-2423 and we will be happy to enter your information for you.



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A Message from GIWA Board President

2018 has been another busy year for GIWA's Board and Staff. Construction of Phase I of our much needed \$15 million water reclamation facility (wastewater treatment) is underway. Included in this newsletter is an update on our progress and what to expect over the next couple of years as this project is completed in phases.

At your 2017 Annual Meeting, the membership approved a series of rate increases designed to ensure GIWA could obtain the necessary financing for the wastewater treatment plant project and maintain a sound financial condition. Your Board carefully reviewed our financial statements and determined that the full 9.5% increase previously approved is necessary this year due to rising interest rates and increasing construction costs. The increase will become effective October 1, 2018.

An expansion of our water treatment facilities was completed in December 2017. The project included retrofitting our reverse osmosis plant to a modern design that produces 194,000 gallons per day, and two new deep wells. With these improvements, GIWA was able to meet the Island's water demands this year without purchasing supplemental water from Charlotte County Utilities.

Your Board and Staff will remain proactive in planning for future maintenance projects and upgrades to your water and wastewater system.

Respectfully,
Leslie Diaz



Watering Restrictions

GIWA's service area is under twice per week watering restrictions as follows:

- Odd numbered addresses may water on Wednesday and/or Saturday;
- Even numbered addresses may water on Thursday and/or Sunday;
- Watering is **prohibited between 10 am and 4 pm** in CHARLOTTE COUNTY;
- Water is **prohibited between 9 am and 5 pm** in LEE COUNTY.

Please visit us at mygiwa.com or contact us at 941-964-2423 for further information.

Do you want speedy emergency alerts such as precautionary boil water notices via telephone, text or email?

Please visit mygiwa.com and select the CodeRed link under the Customer Service tab.