

be the third “leg” of the stool. Petersen commented that a long-term agreement could potentially include negotiation for lower out-of-district rates and/or a de-escalation clause that would automatically lower Donala’s rates if out-of-district rates decreased. With his May 2020 retirement approaching, Petersen stated that he would like to achieve a long-term agreement before his departure.

Donala and other wastewater districts feel financial burden of regulation compliance
Petersen confirmed a July 31 meeting between GMS Inc. of Colorado Springs, Donala, and Glacier Con-

struction Co. to begin work on the Water Treatment Plant Residuals Dewatering Facility (RDF). This facility will keep the Upper Monument Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF)—partner-owned by Donala, Triview Metropolitan District, and Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, and managed by Donala—in compliance when arsenic discharge limits take effect.

Arsenic and nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous occur naturally in groundwater and are removed from drinking water before the water is sent to Donala customers for consumption. In the past, Donala had disposed of the extracted substances via the UMCRWWTF and was only required to monitor the various concentrations that the facility discharged. Oct. 1, 2019 marks a deadline for a new regulation that limits the amount of arsenic that can be discharged by wastewater treatment facilities into the environment. It is planned that the new RDF will remove the arsenic as solid waste and prevent the majority from reaching the UMCRWWTF, thereby reducing the wastewater treatment facility’s environmental discharge concentrations to Monument Creek. Essentially, the RDF will serve as an additional—albeit pricey at an estimated \$1 million—screening step.

The RDF, however, is not the only additional measure taken by Donala to reduce the UMCRWWTF’s amount of arsenic discharged. The district has also increased its use of renewable surface water from its Willow Creek Ranch source water, which dilutes the arsenic contributed by Donala groundwater after mixing to acceptable levels, below potable water limits, for subsequent distribution to Donala’s drinking water customers. As noted earlier, transport of this water adds significant cost due to Donala’s use of CSU’s SDS and permitting through Pueblo County. Donala pays 50% more than in-district customers for CSU treatment of Donala’s surface water and will also pay total initial mitigation impact fees of \$260,000 to Pueblo County and the Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District by Jan. 31, 2020. See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n8.htm#dwsd> for the ongoing mitigation payments schedule.

Additional reports from the manager

Petersen provided his perspective on other activities:

- He did not detect any anomalies in revenue or

expenses for either the water or wastewater financial reports. He explained that legal expenses in the water statement were over budget due to the additional activities involved in supporting Donala’s Pueblo County 1041 permit request. Having initiated the budget planning process, Petersen requested director input in anticipation of presenting the 2020 draft budget at the Oct. 15 board meeting.

- One of Donala’s highly valued water operators, Kevin Bolinsky, has resigned. to accept a regulatory position with El Paso County Public Health. The district is actively seeking a water operator and anticipates filling the position by the end of September.
- Discussions regarding the North Monument Creek Interceptor (NMCI), a potential regional wastewater pipeline that may allow northern entities, including Donala, to send wastewater flows to the J. D. Phillips Water Resource Recovery Facility, continue but progress slowly.
- Late spring runoff and reduced water demand created concerns of a “spill” at Pueblo Reservoir, which will only store 499 acre-feet of water rights owned by Donala, but cooperative movement of water by the entities with storage rights prevented a spill. Petersen expressed gratitude that CSU willingly accounted for one month’s worth of water for Donala and added that he and Superintendent of Water Operations Mark Parker intend to monitor spill factors closely throughout the winter. “The state needs storage ...[it] is critical,” if we want to take advantage of years of good snowpack,
- G&S Development conferenced with Donala and is positioned to begin installation of the remaining 12-lot cul-de-sac lots and respective utilities at the former Gleneagle Golf Course.
- Donala is coordinating efforts with El Paso County Stormwater Management and multiple construction companies to determine the responsible parties for—and to mitigate—continued runoff and sedimentation onto a private property and public ROW in the district.
- Donala’s new 1041 permit with Pueblo County requires logging all its contact with El Paso County Stormwater Management.

Public comments received

During public comments, Donala resident Steve Hrin thanked Donala’s board and staff for being a “remarkable organization” and expressed appreciation for the district’s communication practices. He also posed questions pertaining to the district’s 40-year carriage agreement for Laughlin water right renewable surface flows. Petersen confirmed completion of the carriage agreement with Fountain Mutual Irrigation Co. (FMIC).

Petersen stated that Donala is in negotiations with the city of Fountain to partner on gravel pit storage along Fountain Creek, but the initial two- to three-year reclamation process must be finished before construction can begin. Referring to the possibility of wastewater regionalization with CSU, Petersen remarked that Donala might also receive return flows from the J. D. Phillips Water Resource Recovery Facility and pick up some of the Laughlin water as part of that potential project. It all depends on CSU’s upcoming decisions about regionalization partnership.

The meeting ended at 2:38 p.m.

The next board meeting will be held 1:30 p.m. Sept. 19, at the district office located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs. The directors meet in the district office conference room. Board meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of the month. More information is available by calling (719)488-3603 or accessing www.donalawater.org.

Jennifer Kaylor can be reached at jenniferkaylor@ocn.me.

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