

Floating Solar Array Town of Walden Water Treatment Plan

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FLOATING AN IDEA

The small Colorado town of Walden, in oil and gas country, is embracing renewable energy, too, with a new, buoyant solar array



Scott Simmons, left, assistant general manager and engineering manager of Mountain Parks Electric, and Carl Trick, director of Mountain Parks Electric, read the meter of the floating solar array that feeds into the power supply of the Walden water treatment plant on Aug. 22. *Alicia Olivares, The Denver Post*

By Judith Kohler *The Denver Post*

A Colorado solar-energy innovator, Thor describes Walden, a town of about 600 people at an elevation of nearly 8,100 feet and with an average annual high temperature of just over 51 degrees Fahrenheit.

It's not the first place you would expect to break new ground when it comes to renewable energy. But it's what the town decided to do on wa-

ter, not the ground, that makes it a trend-setter. Walden is the only Colorado community with a floating solar array and one of just a handful nationally.

Now, the Colorado Energy Office is looking around the state to see if other bodies of water would make good solar energy sites. Walden town officials and the companies and consultants behind the project are getting frequent calls from others interested

in their own floating arrays of photovoltaic panels.

The project was named the 2019 commercial/industrial project of the year by the Colorado Solar and Storage Association.

"We looked at wind power, given how windy it is up here," Walden Mayor Jan Dustin said.

But town officials had concerns about the costs of operating and maintaining a wind farm. Town offi-

cials then considered a floating solar array, which Dustin said Johnson Controls first suggested. The company was working with the town to figure out ways to be more energy efficient.

"When we got done talking about it, it seemed like a good idea. It seemed financially feasible," Dustin said. "I didn't know it was so innovative."

341.05 Renewable Energy Distributed Generation (DG) over 25 kW and up to 250 kW

For net metered Distributed Generation installations where most of the energy generated by a renewable resource (solar, wind, hydro, biomass, waste) is used by the customer at the net metered service, the following rates apply to the energy delivered to the Cooperative:

- a. Monthly energy generated by the DG, but not delivered to Cooperative: All energy generated by the customer, but not delivered to the Cooperative, may be used to offset energy that the customer would have otherwise purchased from the Cooperative. This energy will not otherwise be credited or paid for by Cooperative.
- b. Monthly energy delivered to the Cooperative: Any monthly energy delivered to the Cooperative by the customer will be credited to the customer's monthly bill at the Cooperative's average wholesale cost of power (demand and energy charges) during that month.
- c. The customer retains all rights to environmental attributes (renewable energy credits).

